

# Queensland Native Police

The Final Years



PAUL DILLON

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By

Paul Dillon

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## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Paul Dillon is a Sunshine Coast based author of *Frederick Walker Commandant of the Native Police*, Connor Court Publishing, Brisbane 2018;

*The Murder of John Francis Dowling and the Massacre of 300 Aborigines*, Connor Court Publishing, Brisbane 2019;

*Inside the Killing Fields Hornet Bank, Cullin-la-Ringo & The Maria Wreck*, Connor Court Publishing, Brisbane 2020;

*Queensland Native Police, The First Twenty Years*, 2020;

*The Irvinebank Massacre*, Connor Court Publishing, Brisbane 2021;

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*Bêche-de-mer and the Binghis*, 2022;

*The History of Bêche-de-mer Fishing in Queensland Waters and Adjacent Islands*, Connor Court Publishing, Brisbane 2023;

*Dispela Kantri Bilong Mi, Nau! Queensland Annexes New Guinea*, 2023;

*Kanaka Boats is A-Comin' Pacific Island Labourers in Queensland*, 2023; and

*Queensland's contribution to the development of British New Guinea*, Connor Court Publishing, Brisbane 2023.

He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the Australian National University. Paul joined the Commonwealth Public Service in 1965. On 23 May 1986, he was called to the Bar of New South Wales and practised as a barrister in the Criminal Division of the superior courts of Queensland as counsel for the defence.



Acting Sub-Inspector Marrett and Sub-Inspector Day, State Library of Queensland.

## Contents

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Preface                                    | 6   |
| Introduction                               | 8   |
| Chapter 1 — Assessment                     | 80  |
| Appendix A                                 | 93  |
| Chapter 2 — Eighties                       | 98  |
| Chapter 3 — Nineties                       | 142 |
| Chapter 4 — Nineteen Hundreds              | 162 |
| Chapter 5 — Native Police Internal Affairs | 174 |
| Bibliography                               | 201 |

## Preface

In 2018, I published *Frederick Walker: Commandant of the Native Police*,<sup>1</sup> which covered the history of the northern native police from their inception in 1848 to the dismissal of Walker in 1855. In 2020, I published *Queensland Native Police The First Twenty Years*. This book covered the period 1855 to 1879 and dealt with the complete history of the native police within that timeframe. In the course of researching the subject, it became apparent to me that Queensland's indigenous colonial history was not one-dimensional and that eulogising the heroic struggle of indigenes for national liberation and land rights while denouncing the invasion by imperialist forces and its local servants in the same breath, was not a true narrative of the historical development of colonial Queensland. The emphasis on pastoral expansion in Queensland with its alleged attendant effect of indigenous insurgency was, even if true, not the full picture. Because the evil colonists expanded into the surrounding seas, waterways and islands thus impacting other disparate groups of indigenes. Moreover, the evil colonisers not satisfied with their local blacks, imported a whole new race of natives, South Sea Islanders, to perform slave labour on their sugar plantations.<sup>2</sup>

Consequently, I was sidetracked as I set about exploring these issues. Since 2020, I have published *Bêche-de-mer and the Binghis*, 2022,<sup>3</sup> *Dispela Kantri Bilong Mi, Nan! Queensland Annexes New Guinea*, 2023,<sup>4</sup> and *Kanaka Boats is A-Comin' Pacific Island Labourers in Queensland*, 2023. Having endeavoured to understand the colonial history of Queensland relating to indigenous groups who were part of the development of the colony, I then turned to completing the history of the Queensland Native Police. Based on my research, the history of the Queensland Native Police cannot be told in a single tome. The subject is a vast array of intricate pathways leading to all aspects of colonial life. Where ever the settler went, eventually, he would interact with an indigene in some form or other. This would invariably lead to situations of conflict from the very real lack of understanding between the parties, coupled with, on occasion, the unscrupulous greed of each party to take advantage of the other. The result of which would end in serious personal injury or crippling property damage. With the expectations of the settler not being realised, the government would be accused of failing the settler community and, consequently, traditional methods of control and regulation would be introduced. To portray this endless series of events, together with their attendant interventions and inquiries, is impossible within the scope of a single volume.

The reader should read *Bêche-de-mer and the Binghis* in conjunction with this book, as I have excluded from the narrative any material relating to the maritime frontier. Where I felt it was necessary to refer to events on the maritime frontier, I have provided the appropriate citation. All of my writings on Queensland colonial history relate to the Queensland Native Police. Therefore, the reader is encouraged to refer to them out of interest or the need to clarify an issue. Furthermore, the research arising from the compilation of this book reinforces my approach and conclusions reached in my earlier books and I take this opportunity to reaffirm all my earlier books.

It is as well to remind the reader that the timeframe is nineteenth-century colonial Queensland and although firearms, and communication and transport infrastructure had made significant advances in technology such as breach loading and repeating rifles, steam engines, railways and the telegraph, the colony remained undeveloped and sparsely populated with significant numbers of

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Walker: Commandant of the Native Police, Paul Dillon, Connor Court Publishing, Brisbane 2018.

<sup>2</sup> So, the Comintern says. See Reynolds, Loos, Saunders, Evans, Richards, Bottoms, Burke et al.

<sup>3</sup> The History of Bêche-de-mer Fishing in Queensland Waters and Adjacent Islands, Paul Dillon, Connor Court Publishing, Brisbane 2023 (an abridged edition).

<sup>4</sup> Queensland's Contribution to the Development of British New Guinea, Paul Dillon, Connor Court Publishing, Brisbane 2023 (an abridged edition).

uncontacted tribal Aboriginals still occupying areas of the colony. Even at this early stage of political growth, the colony was divided between the north and the southeast metropolitan region. This dichotomy shaped the outlook of how the colony was viewed and governed. The colony was described as settled or unsettled. Aboriginals were viewed as degenerate pariahs on the outskirts of southern towns while in the north, as hostile, treacherous blacks. The police were divided into a white force to protect and supervise the white population and a force of indigenous sepoy under white officers to control and regulate the wild blacks of the unsettled districts of the north and west. Furthermore, these black sepoy were eventually divided into two groups known as troopers and trackers. Ultimately, the euphemism tracker was adopted across the board to avoid any connotation of violence towards Aboriginals. However, trackers were employed purely for their skills in bushcraft<sup>5</sup> and for tracking lost persons or criminals on the run. In some respects, they could form a separate study, but the limitation of space precluded their inclusion in the book.



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<sup>5</sup> Such as fire making, foraging food and water, shelter making, general navigation, and horse finding and catching.

## Introduction

The Governor of the day was Sir Arthur E Kennedy, K.C.M.G., C.B. The Third Session of the Eight Parliament of Queensland opened on 6 July 1880. The Hon Thomas McIlwraith was the Premier and Colonial Treasurer; the Colonial Secretary and Secretary for Public Instruction was the Hon A H Palmer; the Secretary for Public Works and Mines was the Hon J M Macrossan; the Secretary for Public Lands was the Hon P Perkins; the Attorney-General was the Hon H R Beor; and the Postmaster-General was the Hon C H Buzacott.

The major exports for 1880 were wool £1,387,530; gold £820,643; sugar £205,176; and tin ore £107,640. The northern seaports of the colony were Townsville, Cardwell, Cairns, Port Douglas, Cooktown, Thursday Island, Normanton, and Sweers Island. 5,768 miles of telegraph line had been laid to 159 telegraph stations with substantial post and telegraph offices at Townsville, Cairns, Port Douglas and Cooktown.

Progressive lines of railway were laid; there was the Maryborough to Gympie line, the line from Bundaberg towards Tenningering or Mount Perry, a district containing rich copper mines. The next was the line from Townsville to Charters Towers, one of the most permanent and promising goldfields of the day.

No important discovery of gold was made in the colony until Nash discovered Gympie in April 1867. Subsequently, other promising and lucrative goldfields were opened up, chief among these were Ravenswood, the Cape River, the Etheridge, Charters Towers, the Palmer and Hodgkinson. The rapid rise of Cooktown on the Endeavour River, named in honour of Captain Cook was one of the marvels of gold mining and speculation. Cooktown was proclaimed a Customs' port about 1874 or 1875, and the rush to its tributary the Palmer, both of Europeans and Asiatics, had scarcely abated by 1880. In 1875 came the Hodgkinson "rush." This district was situated a little south of the Palmer, the goldfields being about 70 miles inland, communicating with the fine harbour of Trinity Bay or Port Cairns.

## THE ABORIGINAL QUESTION.

On 27 March 1880, the *Brisbane Courier* published a lengthy editorial on the conditions and treatment of Aborigines within Queensland. Furthermore, it offered a solution to the aboriginal question:

Over vast tracts of the south and centre of Queensland, the aborigines have dwindled to a mere fraction of their former numbers. Their tribal organisation is completely shattered by the discontinuance of the peculiar social observances that sustained it, and the great majority have resigned themselves to the position of helots, performing desultory services for the settlers in return for scraps of broken meats and cast-off clothing. Their drunken brawls on the outskirts of country towns are provocative of disgust rather than sympathy, while constant familiarity with their presence has blunted our perceptions of the duty it should teach.

But there is another group inhabiting the recently opened Cape York, and with whom we have been at open warfare. In their case, as in every other where the occupation of any tract of country has been impeded by the hostility of the aborigines, want of mutual understanding is principally to blame for the collisions that have occurred. From the first dawn of the colonisation of our territory, white men of sufficient intelligence to interpret and negotiate have been found domiciled with the blacks; and it is deeply to be regretted that their services have never been utilised. Had the peculiar qualifications enjoyed by such men as Bracefield, Davis, Morrill, and Pelletier been appreciated, and

their aid enlisted towards the pacification of their late hosts, an enormous saving in money, human life, and moral prestige might have been effected. Mr J V Mulligan, in his diary of a recent prospecting expedition in the Cape York peninsula, makes a suggestion that strikes the keynote of the course to be adopted:

Christy speaks the blacks' language most correctly, and can often correct the blackboy. This boy says he will go with Christy to the Daintree, his country, and tell his people how good he has been to him, and that if blackfellow no kill horse and bullock white fellow no shoot blackfellow. Christy is game to go; in fact, that is the place where Christy picked up the language. Now, here would be an excellent chance for making friends with and civilising the blacks, so that in a very short time through this medium native police would scarcely be required; and this experiment would not cost the country much.

It is difficult to write calmly on so thoroughly disgraceful and at the same time ineffectual a means towards a questionable end as the Native Police Force, and the present is consequently a favourable moment for making pacific overtures in the interests of blacks and whites alike.<sup>6</sup>

The *Queenslander* of 30 March 1880 copied the *Brisbane Courier*'s novel idea of talking to myall blacks as a way of civilising them and published an editorial called the *Right to Live*:

Now, here would be an excellent chance for making friends with and civilising the blacks, so that in a very short time through this medium, native police would scarcely be required; and the present is consequently a favourable moment for making pacific overtures in the interests of blacks and whites alike.<sup>7</sup>

Then on 1 May 1880, the *Queenslander* published a letter to the editor by Humanity, who said he agreed with the editorial, *Right to Live* of 20 March 1880.<sup>8</sup> Encouraged by Humanity's approval of their stand on Aborigines, the *Queenslander* produced a further editorial called *The Way We Civilise*:

On occupying new territory, the aboriginal inhabitants are treated exactly in the same way as the wild beasts or birds the settlers may find there. Their lives and their property, the nets, canoes, and weapons, which represent as much labour to them as the stock and buildings of the white settler, are held by the Europeans as being at their absolute disposal. Their goods are taken, their children forcibly stolen, and their women carried away, entirely at the caprice of the white men. The least show of resistance is answered by a rifle bullet; in fact, the first introduction between blacks and whites is often marked by the unprovoked murder of some of the former—in order to make a commencement of the work of "civilising" them. Little difference is made between the treatment of blacks at first disposed to be friendly and those who from the very outset assume a hostile attitude. As a rule, the blacks have been friendly at first, and the longer they have endured provocation without retaliating, the worse they have fared, for the more ferocious savages have inspired some fear, and have therefore been comparatively unmolested.<sup>9</sup>

This editorial provoked a flurry of letter writing to the press on the frontier treatment of myall blacks, which was kept alive by the two principal advocates of Aboriginal rights, the *Queenslander* and the *Brisbane Courier*, by provocative editorialising. In a work of this nature, it is not possible to identify and catalogue all the letters and editorials that appeared in the *Queenslander* and *Brisbane Courier* nor give a summary of the views and opinions expressed by the letter writers and the editors of each paper.<sup>10</sup> However, perhaps the following views expressed by the editor of the *Queenslander* of 8 May 1880 may reveal some insight into the thinking of the *Queenslander*.

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<sup>6</sup> Brisbane Courier 27 March 1880 p 4, abridged.

<sup>7</sup> Queenslander 20 March 1880 p 368, abridged.

<sup>8</sup> Page 562

<sup>9</sup> Queenslander 1 May 1880 p 560, abridged.

<sup>10</sup> Please see: The Way We Civilise: Black and White, The Native Police/a series of articles reprinted from the *Queenslander*, Brisbane: G. and J. Black, 1880.

We cannot of course, argue first principles over again, and we shall assume that murder, rape, and robbery are crimes whether the victims be black or white. And, that being understood, we must explain further that we entertain no such preposterous idea as that the settlement of the colony is an evil deed that ought to be undone. Nor do we wish to be understood as objecting to the slaying of blacks in defence of the lives or property of settlers. We acknowledge that in many cases the occupation of a tract of country by the whites cannot be affected except at the cost of a struggle with the aborigines, and wherever that is the case, the shooting of blacks is inevitable. But we maintain that the struggle might be prevented in most cases, and might be diminished in all if entered upon in a more rational and humane fashion. We assert that the unchecked license indulged in by some of the white settlers, and the systematic barbarities practised by the Native Police, intensify the resistance of the blacks into a struggle of absolute despair, and that in the conflict the white man sinks to such a level that he only outshines the black savage by the greater ferocity he displays. And this conduct is as foolish as it is criminal, for the blacks speedily discover the superiority of the whites, and would, if permitted, in most cases be willing enough to submit to their occupation of the country, and careful to avoid meddling with them. But they are goaded to such a state of desperation by the promiscuous massacres perpetrated by the police, and the outrages of some of the settlers, that despair lends them the courage to continue the hopeless war, and they go on spearing cattle and clubbing solitary travellers because they find that they have nothing to hope for by abstaining from such practices. For the Native Police, we would substitute a force composed mainly of white men, assisted by black trackers.<sup>11</sup>

*Queenslander* of 31 July 1880, in its editorial of White & Black, summed up as follows:

The correspondence on the aboriginal question serves to illustrate pretty fully the differing opinions on the subject held by settlers in various parts of the colony. Writers opposed to our views generally take the same line in commenting on the facts we have brought forward; they declare that the statements are either not true or grossly exaggerated. To this, we can give but one answer—their truth may be investigated by a process which the Government can adopt if it pleases. We have received just as many confirmations as denials of our statements, and may fairly claim to have made out a strong *prima facie* case for a thorough enquiry.<sup>12</sup>

Summary of Newspaper Editorials and Letters written during 1880 on Frontier Conflict.

| Paper       | Date               | Title                         | Author           | Remarks  |
|-------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|--|
| Q'lander    | 28 Feb 1880 p 276. | Mulligans Prospect-ing Party. | James V Mulligan |  |
| Q'lander    | 20 Mar 1880 p 368  | Right to Live                 | Editorial        |  |
| Bne Courier | 27 Mar 1880 p 4.   |                               | Editorial        |  |
| Q'ander     | 1 May 1880 p 560   | The Way we Civilise           | Editorial        |  |
| Q'lander    | 1 May 1880 p 562   | The Right to Live             | Humanity         | Agreed with Q'lander Right to Live of 20 March 1880  |
| Q'lander    | 8 May 1880 p 594   | Black v. White                | Never Never      | Disagreed with The Way we Civilise. Nothing is easier than, on paper, to work out a civilising code to make the savage a docile, tractable being, anxious to work and eager to please; and nothing harder than to take one's flocks and herds and go into the desert and carry the theory into practice. |
| Q'lander    | 8 May 1880 p 592   | White & Black                 | Editorial        | Disagreed with Never Never.  |
| Q'lander    | 15 May 1880 p 627  | Black v. White                | Outis            | Disagreed with Never Never. Suddenly a shrill whistle, then the sharp rattle of Sniders, shriek on shriek, rushing to and fro, hewing down men, women, and children before them.   |

<sup>11</sup> White & Black p 592, abridged.

<sup>12</sup> P 144.

|             |                     |                       |             |  |
|-------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------|--|
|             |                     |                       |             | How long shall these things be? That they exist no dweller in outside country can deny.  |
| Q'lander    | 22 May 1880 p 658.  | White v. Black        | Outis       | The solution to the Black problem, employ them as coolies.   |
| Bne Courier | 26 May 1880 p 5     | White v. Black        | Outis       | <i>Courier</i> 12 May, Never Never endeavours to justify the Native Police force; sorry to believe that he believes one-half of what he has written; if he does, he ought to be locked up as a would-be murderer of the most dangerous description.  |
| Bne Courier | 27 May 1880 p 3     | White v. Black        | Outis       | A repeat of <i>Qlder</i> letter of 22 May 1880 p 658.  |
| Bne Courier | 29 May 1880 p 6     | Black v. White        | Kinglander  | Agreed with Outis. Reducing the present black police to their proper status (i.e., trackers), but reinforcing the “northern army of occupation” with a few corps of “irregular cavalry,” composed of the best bushman we can select and enlist.  |
| Q'lander    | 29 May 1880 p 688   | Black & White         | Editorial   |  |
| Bne Courier | 31 May 1880 p 3.    | White v. Black        | A.C.G.      | Outis proposes to make the blacks work. The idea is a good one, but how are we to get them to work? The plan of bringing them down from Western stations to work on the coast under Ceylon overseers is manifestly absurd.   |
| Bne Courier | 2 June 1880 p 5.    | White and Black       | Never Never | Disagrees with the <i>Queenslander</i> ; the paper raises its voice against our treatment of the natives, and issues an atrocity column; why has its conscience slumbered so long? Why through all the past years of black dispersion has it not done what it professes to do now?   |
| Bne Courier | 3 June 1880 p 3.    | White and Black       | Humanity    | Disagrees with Never Never. I trust he may yet learn that the naked truth is not to be dispersed by the pen, however facile, of any unhesitating utilitarian.  |
| Bne Courier | 5 June 1880 p 5.    | The Black Police      | Veritas     | Disagrees with Outis. As one who has served in the force; gives an unqualified denial to the broad and sweeping assertion of your anonymous correspondent, Outis, as to the character of the officers of the native police.  |
| Q'lander    | 5 June 1880 p 722   | White v. Black        | A.C.G.      | Repeats the <i>Brisbane Courier</i> letter of 31 May 1880 p 3.   |
| Bne Courier | 9 June 1880 p 3     | Black Police          | Outis       | Disagreed with Veritas   |
| Q'lander    | 12 June 1880 p 755  | Black v. White        | A.N.        | Agrees with the <i>Queenslander</i> . 1st. An offending and avenging scattered population of black heathen savages. 2nd. An offending and avenging number of white Christians. 3rd. A still more offending and avenging force of native police.  |
| Bne Courier | 16 June 1880 p 3    | The Way We Civilise   | Veritas     | Reply to Outis of 9 June 1880 p 3.   |
| Q'lander    | 19 June 1880 p 784  | White & Black         | Editorial   | North Gregory is right in saying that by inspiring fear and respect, can we influence adult blacks. That is the basis of the system applied to them, and the ground on which we hope to see them brought under control to the advantage of the pioneers and the blacks, by police capable of punishing offenders, but equally able to protect the innocent and peaceful. |
| Q'lander    | 19 June 1880 p 786. | Humanity v. Brutality | Pioneer     | I entirely concur with your views and hope they may be carried out. I have always thought it monstrous that the actions of the Native Police were not allowed to be properly witnessed and regularly reported, and consider that the reverse should be the rule. The force should protect as well as punish blacks.  |
| Q'lander    | 19 June 1880 p 786. | White & Black         | Humanity    | Regards Never Never as callous.  |

|             |                     |                 |                   |  |
|-------------|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--|
| Q'lander    | 19 June 1880 p 786. | White & Black   | Veritas           | I assert emphatically that the Native Police officers are as honourable and humane as any officers of the Crown, and would regard with as great horror as Outis the atrocities with which he charges them.   |
| Q'lander    | 31 July 1880 p 144. | White & Black   | Editorial         |  |
| Bne Courier | 14 Sept 1880 p 5    | Black v. White  | William Armit     | Ex-NP. Vilification is not argument, and I must express my astonishment that an influential journal, the paper par excellence of Queensland, should have set the example in ransacking our vocabulary of opprobrious epithets to insult some fifteen or twenty gentlemen to whose watchful and energetic care the safety of outlying districts has been entrusted by the Government. |
| Bne Courier | 7 Oct 1880 p 5      | How we civilise | North-East Coast  | If it is necessary to kill them, let us kill them openly for by saying dispersing when we mean killing, we do not hide the fact but draw special attention to it. The one redeeming feature is that by the use of the term, we show we have grace enough to be ashamed of the act.   |
| Q'lander    | 20 Nov 1880 p 658   | Black v. White  | North Gregory     | Outis replied to <i>Q'lander</i> , 27 Nov 1880 p 690: 'I must emphatically affirm that what is stated in my letter of June 12 is accurate and true.'   |
| Q'lander    | 18 Dec 1880 p 786   | Black v. White  | Stanhope O'Connor | Ex-NP. My greatest difficulty lay in my men not understanding the language of the different tribes, and it took us two years before we could make advances to them.  |

The letter-writing craze became so intense that the Brisbane *Telegraph* published the following notice to its readers:

#### THE NATIVE POLICE CONTROVERSY.

The *Queenslander* a few weeks ago opened its columns for a discussion of the manner in which the wild blacks are treated by the white settlers and the black police, or "native troopers," as they are more generally called. This subject has been discussed in Parliament once a year, for the last fifteen or sixteen years at least, as regularly as the vote on the estimates for the native troopers came to be considered in the committee of supply. It has been ventilated in the Press without ceasing; it has been referred to from the pulpit times out of number, and on platforms in every part of the colony — and nothing has come of all this agitation, accept an enormous expenditure of eloquent denunciation and the utterance of many pretty platitudes. Whether anything will be done to supersede the native police, while wild blacks in considerable numbers remain to spear the sheep and cattle and rob and murder the white settlers in the vicinity of their haunts, is somewhat doubtful. At all events, we have no intention of allowing the matter to be again discussed in our correspondence columns just at present.<sup>13</sup>

*Western Star and Roma Advertiser* also entered the fray and offered their commentary on the great debate as follows:

It is impossible however to induce men who have seen their families or their neighbours cruelly murdered, after the women have been brutally outraged by the blacks, to look upon the case with the same cool complaisance as the black protectors in Brisbane when perusing the account in the telegraphic columns of the *Courier* at breakfast time, and it is necessary in dealing with men to make some allowance for the weaknesses of human nature. Collisions between whites and blacks in newly settled districts are not to be avoided. Our government is not only bound in honour and humanity to defend its people (who it has authorised to settle in those districts) by punishing aggressions committed by the blacks; but a true concern for the interests of the latter demands that the same cause should be adopted. The advantage of making a frontier war with regular police, even if blacks, instead of the settlers, is that the conduct of the war is thereby kept in the hands of the Government.

<sup>13</sup> *Telegraph* 30 June p 2 & 3 July 1880 p 7.

It is, however, the duty of the Government to exercise this control properly, and it is not alleged, that our government has failed in the performance of this duty. If those who have evidence to prove that the Native Police have been guilty of cruelty or unnecessary slaughter of blacks would give their information to the Colonial Secretary, or the nearest magistrate, instead of to the editor of the *Queenslander*, the truth of their accusations could be proved or disproved.<sup>14</sup>

The report of the Commissioner of Police for the year 1880 made the following observation:

I am glad to be able to report that the efforts which have for some time been made to induce the natives of the northern districts to come to friendly terms are at length commencing to show satisfactory results, and I trust that in my next Report, I will be able to state that the Native Police Force in these districts can be considerably reduced, and in some instances replaced by ordinary police with trackers.

When the annual estimates came on for debate in the Legislative Assembly, 13 September 1880, the Colonial Secretary, Arthur Palmer, advised that the native troopers were reduced from 200 to 128. Mr Stuble asked whether the 52 black trackers mentioned were part of the 128 troopers, or if they were separate altogether. The Colonial Secretary pointed out that the 52 trackers were put down on the estimates separately and added if the hon member had looked at the report of the Commissioner of Police for the year, he would see that the object was eventually to do away with the Native Police Force altogether. It was a step in a direction that had been contemplated for some time, and it was to attach these native trackers to the white police. For instance, if there were two policemen stationed at an outside station, there would be two or three trackers attached to them. These would be quite distinct from the native troopers, who would still be retained for service in the outside districts. He hoped that the black police, as they were commonly called, had nearly done their duty, and that the Government would be able, gradually, to do away with them entirely, and retain native trackers to act with the white police, who would be always in company with them. He believed they would be a very useful force, and he was supported in that belief by the Commissioner of Police.

Mr King said he believed that the resolution was due in a great measure to a spurious agitation caused by the publication in the *Queenslander* of some sensational articles written by a highly imaginative reporter, the greater part of which he (Mr King) knew to be false. It was very hard for men in outlying districts, who even now ran the risk of losing their lives and were constantly aware of the necessity of being prepared to defend themselves, to have the small amount of protection given diminished. They should first protect their countrymen who came out at their invitation.

The Colonial Secretary said he could assure the hon member that the ridiculous articles in the *Queenslander* and *Courier* had not had the slightest effect on the preparation of the estimates. It had been under consideration long before any articles appeared that the native trackers attached to white police would be more useful in many districts of the colony than native troopers; but when he stated he hoped to do away with the black police, he meant in the future. There was no immediate intention of doing away with the force, for they could not be done without suddenly. He had listened to a debate like the present for every session during the last fifteen years, and it had always come to nothing. Hon members could say no more now than they could fifteen years ago. After a three-hour debate, the estimates were put and passed.<sup>15</sup>

On private members' day, 21 October 1880, the Hon John Douglas called for a commission to inquire into the operations of the native police. The motion was:

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<sup>14</sup> Western Star and Roma Advertiser 18 September p 2, abridged.

<sup>15</sup> Hansard LA, 13 September 1880 p 664-678.

1. That an address be presented praying that His Excellency will be pleased to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into and report upon the organisation, discipline, operation, and distribution of the present Native Police Force, together with the best means whereby the lives, both of the pioneer settlers and the aboriginal natives in the coast and frontier districts may be protected.

2. That in order to make effectual provision for the prosecution of such inquiry, it is expedient to introduce a Bill empowering the Commissioners to require the attendance of witnesses before them and to compel such witnesses to answer all questions put to them touching the matters of the said inquiry and indemnify all witnesses who shall make true discovery touching all things as to which they are examined against any prosecution or penalties in respect of the matters deposed to by them.

A considerable portion of the Hon John Douglas's speech was made up of extracts from articles by a special correspondent on the natives in the far north, which appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

ARTICLES—THE NATIVES IN THE FAR NORTH. I – VIII.

| Newspaper             | Date         | Brief Highlights   |
|-----------------------|--------------|--|
| Sydney Morning Herald | 22 July 1880 | The whole of the Mitchell River tribes, be they one or many, are distinguished by their hostility to the whites. They are unmistakably cannibals. The Daintree River blacks killed 3 cedar getters who retaliated and killed 8 blacks.   |
| Sydney Morning Herald | 5 Aug 1880   | A trooper is carefully schooled into keeping his own counsel. If you question any further, they will always deny shooting any of them. They will tell you that they "dispersed" them, or with a knowing laugh, will say they "civilised" them.   |
| Sydney Morning Herald | 23 Aug 1880  | In the Palmer diggings, the number of men who were killed and eaten by the natives was considerable. Many have been maimed for life by the spears and injuries from their weapons. One man showed me the scar of a large wound in the calf of the leg, caused by a spear.  |
| Sydney Morning Herald | 4 Sep 1880   | It is a pretty well-known fact that the natives can never be depended upon, no matter how kindly they may be treated. In the history of all the outrages that have taken place at various times, the victims have always been persons who believed in the aborigines and treated them with uniform kindness.   |
| Sydney Morning Herald | 18 Sep 1880  | The first outrage the natives have to complain of is stealing their women and children. That the natives resent such outrages upon them in the bitterest way there can be no doubt, though we must not suppose that their feelings on the subject are quite what our own would be.   |
| Sydney Morning Herald | 29 Sep 1880  | The native trooper has been singled out for attack. I have already pointed out how untrustworthy, or open to suspicion, are the accusations of these agitators. There is a great deal of humbug and cheap philanthropy floated about on the native question. It is very easy to write letters, garnished with sensational facts, and it is easier still to rail at the present state of things.  |
| Sydney Morning Herald | 16 Oct 1880  | White men would never do what the troopers do; they could never live in the scrubs and brave the jungle fever with impunity; neither could white men track the natives, nor follow them into their haunts as the boys do. They know their habits; they know their language, and they know their signals. Besides this, white men would never communicate with the natives. It must not be imagined that the boys only trace the myall to shed his blood. |
| Sydney Morning Herald | 30 Oct 1880  | 1. Keep the natives away from the towns, for their sake and the sake of the health and well-being of the colonists. 2. Give them reserves of land where they remain unmolested. 3. Give them food and clothing so that they may not perish from starvation. 4. Erect some organisation for their care and protection.  |

The Colonial Secretary said the correspondent had been got hold of and treated to a dish of well-seasoned campfire stories. He further added the hon gentleman had commenced his speech by stating that the sole function of the native police was to disperse the blacks, but that was entirely wrong, the instructions given to the native police officers were not to disperse the blacks but to patrol their districts, and, as far as they could, to get into communication with the blacks and try to make them understand as far as possible, "If you let me alone I will let you alone." Many officers had tried that, and some successfully, but the nature of the blacks was so treacherous that they

were only guided by fear. It was only possible to rule a savage race, and the Australian aboriginal in particular, by brute force, and by showing him that you were his master. The result of Mr Douglas's motion on the aboriginal question was most unsatisfactory. A majority of members shelved the question by carrying a motion for the adjournment of the debate.<sup>16</sup>

On or about 5 November 1880, Inspector Harvey Fitzgerald reported interviewing the wild blacks to the north of Cooktown. He distributed presents among them and made them understand that they would not be molested, provided they did not interfere with the horses and cattle of the settlers. The police saw only gins on this occasion; the blackfellows having fled to the ranges, but the gins promised to bring the remainder of the tribe to meet the inspector next week near Cape Bedford.<sup>17</sup> A telegram received by the Commissioner of Police on 30 November from Sub-Inspector Fitzgerald gave additional particulars:

Returned last night with Sub-Inspector Charles Marrett from patrol. Distributed blankets to the Cape Bedford and Endeavour River tribes, the same blacks we interviewed before. The old men were still difficult to conciliate. The young men meet the police freely. The former still refuse to come in or allow the others to do so. Time and further interviews will alone overcome this. I report another river intervening between here and McIvor River proper, distant sixteen miles north of Cooktown. Its junction with the sea seven miles from Cape Bedford, and is navigable for miles. There is a good entrance for light draft vessels.<sup>18</sup>

Cairns, October 16. A deputation of Smithfield settlers waited upon the police magistrate soliciting aid and protection from the blacks, fearing they were premeditating an onslaught. The depredations committed weekly were on the increase; the farmers would have to abandon their homes and crops if immediate assistance was not rendered. The flying visits of sub-inspectors with their boys were useless. Worse, they were injurious, as was shown by the many robberies and cattle killed the day after they left a locality. If a detachment cannot be stationed permanently in the district, at least black trackers could be stationed here under the control of the local police; and that was all the harassed farmers asked. At Smithfield, there were several families, and the dread of leaving women and children by themselves seriously interfered with the work of the men. Urgent telegrams were forwarded to the Colonial Secretary and to the elected members of the district. A valuable mare, owned by a poor old man over 77 years of age, his entire wealth, was killed by the blacks on the highway. Another settler lost a milking cow per week; everyone was more or less a victim.<sup>19</sup> The Colonial Secretary (Mr Palmer) said the subject had been brought to his notice before, and every attention had been given to it. It was impossible to provide police protection to every man who had a milking cow.<sup>20</sup>

A handful of native troopers left Cairns for Smithfield in charge of Sub-Inspector Carr. As they proceeded along the road, the darkies, by the ranges, advanced nearer the port and camped within three miles of it on the same evening. During the night, they slaughtered a bull on Mr Street's selection. When the remains were discovered, it was hoped that the blacks would leave. The villains returned the next night and the next, and dug up the sweet potatoes. The southern community had no idea of the losses suffered by settlers in the north, but some still remember the outrages of the blacks where now stands Brisbane, Maryborough, Rockhampton, and other large towns.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Hansard LA, 21 October 1880 pp 1130-1146. Queenslander 30 October 1880 p 560.

<sup>17</sup> Brisbane Courier 26 November 1880 p 2.

<sup>18</sup> Brisbane Courier 1 December 1880 p 2. Darling Downs Gazette 3 December 1880 p 2.

<sup>19</sup> Week 30 October 1880 p 10

<sup>20</sup> Hansard LA, 1 October 1880 p 878.

<sup>21</sup> Week 6 November 1880 p 15.

1881 began with the following particulars from the Cooktown papers called bringing in the blacks:

On 11 July, Sub-Inspector Jocelyn Brooke brought in four blacks from the Cape Bedford tribe. He succeeded in opening friendly negotiations with about 100 of them and induced King Jamie and three youths to accompany him to Cooktown. He clothed and fed them and kept faith by conveying them back to their savage territory, and they left, highly gratified by their treatment. King Jamie is a tall, well-formed man about 30 years of age. Two are slightly built but lithe and active young fellows of about 20, and the fourth is a youth of about 15. At first, there was a wild, hunted look in their eyes and sudden hyena flashes, but they gradually became sociable with their uniformed brethren and shook hands cordially with their white visitors. They are like all savage races—but overgrown children—and like children, their best evidence of pleasure is laughter, which lights up their faces with a more softened and humanised expression.

On 13 July, Inspector Harvey Fitzgerald and Sub-Inspector Brooke brought in some wild blacks from the North Shore, where they were first clothed. There were nine men headed by King Billy. Inspector Fitzgerald had been negotiating with them for some time. After being fed by the police, they were allowed to perambulate the streets in charge of a couple of troopers. They were kindly treated by the inhabitants, the mayor not only showing them over his house and garden but presenting each with a coloured handkerchief, which they seemed to prize highly. The visitors were sent back to the North Shore the same day. Inspector Fitzgerald was prepared to bring in the whole tribe, but received instructions first to consult the police magistrate and the mayor. The conference consisted of the PM, the Mayor, Messrs Baird, Hodel, Menzies, and Beardmore, the latter gentleman representing the public, and the others the Government and the Municipal Council, who recommended the formation of an aboriginal camp or depot at the North Shore. Inspector Fitzgerald made the Aboriginals understand that if they spear cattle, they will be punished swiftly and surely. If they remain quiet, they will not be molested and that if they are prepared to work, they will be fed, clothed and paid.<sup>22</sup>

Similar activities were adopted at Cairns on 24 September 1881. Mr Hartley, police magistrate, and Sub-Inspector Carr, accompanied by the Rev J E Tenison-Woods, visited False Cape and sent out troopers to bring in the blacks. These returned with eighteen, consisting of eleven men, two women, and five children. Five of the men had interviewed the police magistrate and the inspector upon a previous occasion and were no way loth to renew the acquaintance; in fact, none of the blacks evinced the slightest fear. After having partaken of food, the Rev Mr Woods wished to witness a corroboree alfresco, and accordingly, the men danced to the music of the women, as is done in more civilised localities. Then a distribution of presents took place; blankets were presented to those who had not previously received any fish hooks, shirts, and tomahawks. Mr Carr was also accompanied by a competent interpreter, who explained to the aborigines why the presents were given to them, and impressed upon them that if they refrained from spearing horses, cattle, and white men, the police would fully protect them. The visit was successful. Subsequently, Mr Carr distributed beef to the same Aborigines.<sup>23</sup>

The Commissioner of Police's report of 1881 to the Colonial Secretary advised:

During the year the attempt to conciliate the Aborigines in the Northern districts, and to make them understand that if they abstain from injuring the persons or property of settlers, they will have no cause to complain of the treatment they will receive in return, have been continued, but owing to the difficulty which has been experienced in inducing these people to come into the camps and townships, have not so far come up to expectation; but I have every hope that by patience and

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<sup>22</sup> Queenslander 16 July p 70 & 30 July 1881 p 149.

<sup>23</sup> Brisbane Courier 5 October 1881 p 5.

perseverance, the Native Police officers in these districts, whose efforts to carry out the system are untiring, will eventually succeed.

I propose this year to suggest stationing an ordinary constable in addition to the campkeeper at each Native Police station in outside districts, as in many places—ordinary police stations being too far distant—Native Police officers are called upon to arrest criminals, and this necessitates their leaving their stations sometimes for long periods either to escort the prisoners or to give evidence, thus rendering their detachments useless for that time.

The *Western Star and Roma Advertiser* of 21 January 1882 reproduced the Rev J E Tennison-Woods', F.G.S. F.L.S. article called *A Day with the Myalls*:

I met Mr Sub-Inspector Carr at the Wild River. His camp was then on the Barron, about 40 miles away, but he agreed to meet me in a week's time at Cairns with a properly equipped party. We proposed to go amongst the Cape Grafton tribes. This selection was made because Mr Carr and the magistrate at Cairns (Mr Hartley) had already had a parley with some natives at False Bay; but as they had no interpreter, nothing could be done to make permanent peaceful overtures. Ten o'clock that night, therefore, was the hour for embarking. The party consisted of six trackers, Mr Carr, Mr Hartley, the interpreter, and two of the pilots' crew to manage the boat.

Billy Button, one of our trackers, had returned, leading with him a native woman with a child about seven years old. She had all her camp things with her in two very large dilly baskets. She was talking incessantly to Billy as she tripped down the rocks in a very lively manner, nothing incommoded by the baskets or the child perched on her shoulder. Billy wasted no words in answering her, for he did not understand a word she was saying. When the girl resumed her talk, which she did as her fears subsided, she told us all and much besides. Two or three little facts came out, which were of great interest to us. She had seen white fellows before very often. She had seen one killed. He was lost in the bush and had nothing to eat. The blacks had followed him for many days, unperceived by him. At last, they speared and ate him. She was very much afraid of the black troopers. She called them Murnian, which was the name she also applied to a rifle—a significant fact. Her first husband had been shot about two years ago, but two years was a date which the interpreters seemed to fix for so many events that I began to suspect its accuracy. Perhaps it meant the longest period he could express. The gin did not tell us how her husband met his death. Of course, she did not blame the Murnian, as one of them was present. Her husband was very "saucy," so the interpreter rendered it, which is the general word for vicious, and is applied to a death adder or venomous spider. A good many whites were killed by the blacks, and a good many blacks had fallen. She was sure many more blacks. Blacks did not kill whites unless they were alone and lost in the bush, and then I suppose they were considered lawful prizes. Blacks killed one another very often; a great fight had happened lately. The tribes of the Johnson River (as we supposed she meant) had come on their hunting ground. They were good friends before and used to pass across each other's country, but not to kill game. So, they fought. A very big blackfellow led the other tribe. He was the biggest blackfellow she had ever seen. But they had killed him and the others fled. Then they ate the big blackfellow. Sometimes blacks ate their children. The men did that. If the child cried a great deal or was deformed, the father would knock it on the head and eat it. Women did not eat their children, and the mothers cried a great deal when they were killed. She could not tell why whites killed blacks, but they always did when they met. It might be for killing horses and cattle. Blacks did that because the meat was good, and the horses and cattle were big; knew they belonged to the whites, and this made whites sulky. She complained a good deal that blacks found it very difficult to get food. The whites had taken all the good country, and they had to go to the mountains or the rocky places on the coast, where the fish was not plentiful. Blacks liked the swamps and creeks, which whites liked too. They used to get all their roots from the swamps. In a day, a gin could fill her bag with these roots. Their tribe was not a large one, but it was a great deal larger once. A good many blacks had died lately, and some had been killed. Sometimes women were shot and children. The children were often stolen, and so were the gins. She could not say if this made blacks sulky.

Many of these questions were not answered in a satisfactory manner. There was an evident hesitation about replying to some and a fear about others; fear no doubt of offending us. Sometimes, too, there was a difficulty with her meaning, and I was afraid that our little interpreter was inclined

to supply what was wanting to make any sort of meaning out of what was said. Besides this, the woman's tongue ran on so fast that half of what she told us could not be gathered.

Mr Carr informed me that once his men had been told by a gin which way the tribe escaped, they had overtaken and punished them for some depredation. A day or two after they had found the poor gin in a dying state at an old camp. All the sinews of her legs had been cut at the knees and heels. This, he said, had been done for having betrayed them.<sup>24</sup>

### MR J M MACROSSAN IN THE NORTH

From Herberton to Thornborough, there was a great want of police protection in the district. Lives had been lost, cattle and horses had been speared by the blacks. A man named Marshall was missing from a place only a few miles below the Union camp; the police had been in search of him, but they had no trackers and were unsuccessful. Another man had been lost from the Tate for some time and had there been trackers available, both these men might have been saved.

Mr B Smith directed the Minister's attention to the great need for four black troopers to be stationed in Thornborough in charge of the sergeant. When reports concerning the blacks were received by the sergeant in Thornborough, he had to send for Sub-Inspector Carr. By that time, the blacks were miles away. While Mr Crowley was down at the Union, the blacks killed a number of his cattle and killed more belonging to Mr Byrne. Within nine months, Mr Byrne had lost a hundred head. Cattle were frequently speared on the Walsh. Within three miles of Thornborough, Mr Martin lost three head last year. The police camp at the Barron River was too far away, but if a patrol was from Northcote to the Mitchell, it might do.

Mr Macrossan: The matter of police protection was an old grievance; he did know whether more police would be a benefit or not; he was very doubtful. The blacks had been driven into the ranges, and they needed some means of living. Lately, the Government had tried to civilise the blacks, not by stealing children from their parents; but by bringing in the men and teaching them to do better, by giving them an occasional feed and blankets, and by telling them that if they did not injure the property of white men, they would not be interfered with. Nearly one-third of the total police vote was spent north of Cape Palmerston. He promised, however, to lay their representations on this subject before the Colonial Secretary, but could do no more than that. A desultory conversation ensued, in which Mr Byrne expressed his conviction that the blacks were starving in the ranges, and ought to be brought into town; and that they had nothing to live on but people's horses and cattle. Sub-Inspector Carr explained, in regard to one of the men who was missing, that there was no evidence that he was killed by the blacks; and it was known that he had been drinking before he left the Palmer. Mr Stenhouse said he had had four intimate friends speared by the blacks — one of them killed; and if he went out again, he would shoot everyone he came across. Three of them were speared while at work near Herberton, and the fourth was killed outside. Mr Macrossan said he did not intend to advise the formation of two or three more parties of black troopers, but he would recommend the remedy suggested by Mr Byrne, and instructions had already been given elsewhere to bring them into the coast.<sup>25</sup>

On 31 March 1882, John W Skene, when catching his horse at Nigger Creek, was speared by the blacks. On 3 April 1882, the residents of the Herberton district presented a petition to the Colonial Secretary praying for police protection against attacks from the blacks. In response to the petition, the Police Commissioner advised that Sub-Inspector Douglas and four troopers were now stationed at Herberton. Sub-Inspector Stafford was directed to patrol the district at once and to do so frequently. Sub-Inspector Carr would also patrol on the northern side of the district. On 14

<sup>24</sup> Page 4; Sydney Morning Herald 13 January 1882 p 7 & 4 February 1882 p 11.

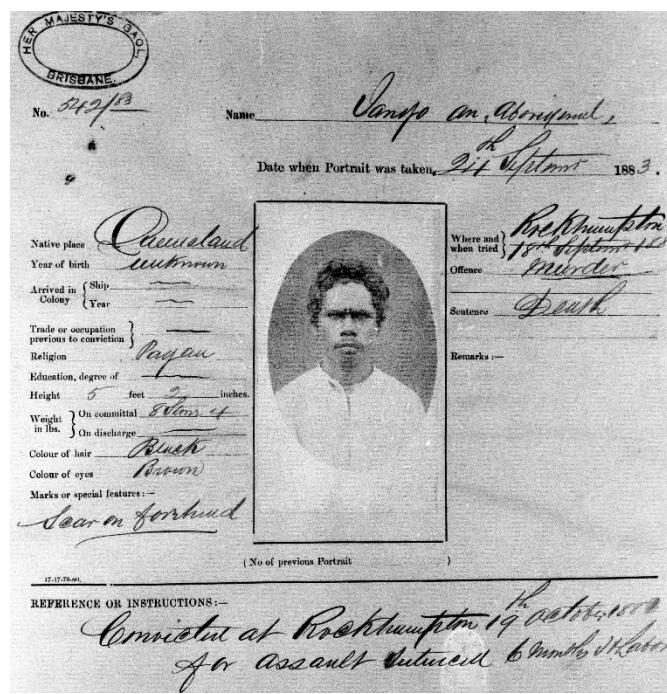
<sup>25</sup> Queenslander 8 April 1882 p 436. Brisbane Courier 20 March 1882 p 2.

November 1882, a native police camp was established at Nigger Creek under the command of Sub-Inspector W Nichols.<sup>26</sup>

The *Queenslander* of 8 July 1882 quoted a correspondent:

*Pioneer* sends us from Maytown a letter, far too long for our columns, calling attention to the insufficiency of police protection in that portion of the Cook district, one detachment of native police having to patrol the whole of the country stretching from the Tate River tin mines, including the Palmer goldfield, to Maytown, a distance of 180 miles. The loss of human life and destruction of property, though a serious matter enough, he remarks, is but a small part of the injury suffered at the hands of the blacks by the settlers; the cattle killed are as nothing compared with the herds scattered and lost. And, owing to the absence of the police from the neighbourhood in which the raids of the blacks occur, and the time which elapses before the police appear upon the scene, innocent men are made to suffer, as the evildoers almost invariably leave the locality in time to escape justice.<sup>27</sup>

The Commissioner of Police received a telegram from Rockhampton, stating that Mrs Miles was assaulted by a blackfellow, Jango with a tomahawk, and severely injured about the head, with little hope of recovery. The wounds indicated included a compound comminuted fracture of the skull, the brain protruding. The operation of trepanning was performed on 11 July 1882. Jango was taken in custody to the hospital, where he was identified by Mrs Miles.<sup>28</sup> Mrs Elizabeth Miles died in hospital on 16 July. The deceased was forty years of age and had no family.<sup>29</sup> On 7 October 1883, the Executive Council decided that the capital sentences passed on James Gardner and Jango for murder, and George for rape, would be carried out on 15 October 1883. The three prisoners sentenced to death at Rockhampton (George Gardner, Jango, and George) were hanged at the Brisbane gaol on 15 October 1883. Gardner showed great emotion, but the others were seemingly indifferent. Death in each case was instantaneous.<sup>30</sup>



QSA ITM2947 DR17244

<sup>26</sup> QSA ITM847066 DR77876, 82/2409. See pp 24 & 115 below.

<sup>27</sup> Page 37.

<sup>28</sup> Week 15 July 1882 p 4.

<sup>29</sup> Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 18 July 1882 p 2.

<sup>30</sup> Morning Bulletin 8 October 1883 p 3. Western Champion 19 October 1883 p 2.

The Commissioner of Police's report of 1882 to the Colonial Secretary advised:

The Native Police have now been moved out to the extreme western border, and I am in hope that, owing to the increase of population in the coast districts, and consequently closer settlement, I will soon be able to recommend their gradual withdrawal from those districts.

Mr Griffith asked, during the September 1882 sittings of the House, what had the Government done about the blacks in the northern part of the colony? He put the question in connection with the native troopers who were employed to control the Aboriginal population of the colony. He had heard that efforts were made to bring the blacks into the townships in the north; but with what success was unknown. He had been told that about 150 blacks had been brought into Thornborough. He wanted to know what the Government had done in the way of changing the native police system. He had no doubt they had done something because people abroad were saying a good deal about the colony and accusing colonists of all sorts of horrible crimes against the blacks.

The Premier said nothing out of the ordinary had happened, except that from Thornborough he had had repeated telegrams from parties stating that a great many blacks were coming in and that they were in a state of starvation. The Executive authorised £500 to be spent on relieving the blacks. The minister authorised the police magistrate to make proper provision for the blacks and to give them a large quantity of beef and potatoes. The police magistrate instructed the sergeant of police to see that they were fed. Concerning the blacks elsewhere, he was satisfied that efforts were being made in Cooktown by men there to employ blacks in different industries. Those men asked the Government to assist them in getting the blacks; he had authorised the police not only to assist but to see that the blacks were treated properly. They were to go with the employers and see what arrangements they made, and to protect both parties. Mr Fahey, the Sub-Collector of Customs, was in charge at the time and performed those duties. He (the Premier) believed that something of the same kind had been done elsewhere. The police had received instructions to assist the blacks wherever they could. Mr Griffith said he noticed that the number of native troopers had been increased from fifty-two to seventy-two. The Premier said the additional troopers were required mostly in the north for new stations.<sup>31</sup>

Thornborough, November 13. Mr J W Cowley shifted all his cattle from the Union district to a fresh property he had taken up in the Coast district because it was impossible to get protection from the blacks. Inspector Carr visited sometimes, but seldom. About twelve blacks came in on 10 November; they were very poor-looking. They received some beef and bread and camped outside Thornborough. This was the third mob that had come in; some three months ago, when the first mob came in the Government provided £50, which had been expended long ago; now the Thornborough people had to feed the blacks to establish goodwill with the darkies. If the Government would supply them with food until they were taught to work, instead of paying fat police inspectors and maintaining a black police force that was of no earthly use but to protect one or two squatters on the Barron River, it would prove a benefit to all concerned, black and white.<sup>32</sup>

Letter to editor — Police Protection in the Burke District.

Police protection on the Leichhardt, Gregory, and Nicholson rivers in the Burke district. There is a native police station at Carl Creek, about 130 miles from Burketown, up the Gregory River. Its position is such that even if the officer in charge was an energetic person, it would be more than he could do to attend to the whole of the district he is supposed to superintend.

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<sup>31</sup> Hansard LA, 20 September 1882 p 719.

<sup>32</sup> Brisbane Courier 4 December 1882 p 6.

The blacks have been very troublesome about here, and will always be so at this time of the year until they are put down by force. They have been killing Messrs Favenc, Brodie, and De Salis's cattle on the Nicholson River. Mr Hedley, who is in charge of the stock, noticed the first killed about Christmas and he at once sent a requisition to the officer in charge of Carl Creek to come down and disperse the blacks, but no notice was taken of his letter, and they continued killing his cattle until, at great inconvenience, he had to disperse them. Rather hard lines that a person with his hands full of work should have to do police duty. They have also been killing cattle on Messrs Travers and Gibson's station, but as the manager is not a great believer in the native police, he did not send for them but did the needful himself. I have also heard that a requisition was sent in from Fiery Downs, which was not attended to, but cannot cite it as a fact. I have heard that two detachments are likely to be stationed at Carl Creek. If they are intended to be of any use to the district or protection of the pioneers, one detachment should be shifted. I would advise some part of the Nicholson River for their camp, as all that country has been taken up recently, and stock is now on its way to Corinda, Messrs Christian and Co.'s station, situated between the Gregory and Nicholson runs; also, Messrs Scrutten and Co. have cattle between the Nicholson and the border, and many more are likely to follow within the next few months. A police station on the Nicholson or thereabouts would be a warrant of protection to would-be purchasers in that direction. It would also enhance the value of properties in the outlying portions of this neighbourhood, and provide protection to drovers and travellers en route to Port Darwin. The gravest fault to be found with the police arrangements out here is that they are not properly or sufficiently horsed; as they are wanted at the close of the dry season, their sorry horses are scarcely able to carry them to the scene of action. When they do arrive, the officer should take particular care that the troopers should not mix or have intercourse with the station blacks. This letter is only intended to suggest a few remedies to the existing police regulations. From one who has suffered on the Albert and Nicholson. Gulf of Carpentaria, 22 January.<sup>33</sup>

The *Queenslander* of 22 April 1882 followed up as follows:

Burketown, January 28. The blacks are playing havoc in the district, killing cattle whenever they get a chance. They nearly wiped out one of Mr Armit's troopers lately and then tried to trap Mr Hann. That old bird was not to be caught with chaff, however, and he still lives. There are now two detachments at Carl Creek, under Messrs Armit and Poingdestre. The powers that be certainly do not deserve any credit for the native police arrangements. A detachment is urgently required on the Port Darwin-road, on the Nicholson, and one will also be required at or near Point Parker; yet here we find two at Carl Creek, 100 miles from the Nicholson in a straight line, and no mail running. Verily, the police officer ought to be taught the geography of Northern Queensland. We have only a monthly mail, a disgraceful case of neglect on the part of the Postmaster-General. Why can we not have one fortnightly? It is urgently required, and I trust this will lead to it being instituted, as under the present regime, our *Queenslanders* are two months old when we get them. Our last date is 26 November! Festina lente with a vengeance.<sup>34</sup>

On 3 January 1883, black troopers surrounded and captured, near Mount Cook seven blacks, two gins and a piccaninny, who twice carried away a Chinese gardener's bananas, pineapples, potatoes and pigs. They belonged to the Cape Bedford tribe and were marched to the Cooktown lockup without any signs of hostility or fear. On 6 January, they returned to their native wilds on the North shore. These men and women received bi-weekly presents of beads, blankets, beef, and bread from the Government. Since the feeding was stopped, they satisfied their civilised cravings by taking what they wanted wherever they could find it.<sup>35</sup>

Normanton, 28 February 1883. The vagabond natives were treating themselves, at the expense of the townspeople, to rations, clothes, cutlery, fowls, &c. A carbine and ammunition, and a dozen new white shirts were also amongst the goods these festive children of the Gulf took. The local

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<sup>33</sup> *Queenslander* 22 April 1882 p 498.

<sup>34</sup> Page 486.

<sup>35</sup> *Brisbane Courier* 12 January 1883 p 4.

paper grumbled, the people grumbled, but Sub-Inspector Poingdestre being absent, nothing could be done, and the nocturnal visits of the marauders continued on and on for a fortnight. At length, Mr Poingdestre returned, boys and horses jaded and dispirited from a tremendous tour via Burketown and the Table-land country. The best of the boys and the least knocked up of the horses were at once despatched in pursuit of the blacks, and in three days Mr Jones, who took charge, returned with a lot of the stolen property, and the satisfactory tidings that the mob had been too thoroughly dispersed to trouble Normanton again this season. Whatever charges may be laid at the door of the native police, there was a tremendous balance to their favour, for without efficient forces in these parts, there would be no security for life or property.<sup>36</sup>

The Commissioner of Police on 5 February 1883 received the following telegram from Normanton:

Just received information that Mr Beresford and four troopers, of whom he was in charge, have been murdered by the blacks on Chatsworth run, about seventy miles from Cloncurry. Sergeant Lacy, a magistrate and seven volunteers are leaving for the scene of the murder.<sup>37</sup>

The population at Normanton was staggered by the news of the late Sub-Inspector Beresford's death. The event was quite appalling and inexplicable. Some 'civilised' blacks had been playing the marauder in Normanton, clearing clotheslines, emptying larders, skinning hen roosts and playing the dunce in the locality. It was their usual game preliminary to the wet weather setting in, and the cunning devils picked their opportunity when Sub-Inspector Poingdestre was away at Burketown, forming a police station there. The blacks picked on the Sub-collector of Customs, and the lessee of the *Herald*, as the principal object of their attention. But most householders got a turn, and even Mr Twisden-Bedford, the surveyor, had to fire off a couple of random Snider shots one night at a skulking scoundrel whom Mr Ernest Favenc heard prowling around the premises.<sup>38</sup>

During 1882, the settlement of Burketown began to expand. Petitions were drawn up, and duly signed for a fortnightly mail service to Rocklands and the Nicholson River, via Burketown, and also for a telegraph line to Burketown.<sup>39</sup> In November, at a sale of government land in Burketown, eighteen allotments realised £512, being £458 over the upset price.<sup>40</sup> However, what was most disturbing was the taking up of runs in the Northern Territory with the consequent movement of large mobs of cattle from Queensland into the Territory. It was said that since January 1882, 14,000 head of cattle had passed up the Nicholson and none of these were inspected. Calls were made for an inspector of stock to be stationed at Burketown. The Carl Creek native police camp at the time consisted of two sub-inspectors and fourteen troopers. It was about 130 miles from Burketown, up the Gregory River. However, it was argued that a police station on the Nicholson or thereabouts would provide better protection to landholders in that direction, and would also be a great protection to drovers and travellers en route to Port Darwin.<sup>41</sup>

On 30 March 1883, Frank Hann, Lawn Hill wrote to the Commissioner of Police about a detachment of native police on the Nicholson. He said everyone out here would like to see a detachment stationed there. Not nearly so much for blacks as it was wanted for the whites. There were so many travelling stockmen bound for the Northern Territory and no one to inspect them. The sub-inspector of police should be made a brand inspector also. Moreover, cattle had been

<sup>36</sup> Brisbane Courier 31 March 1883 p 6. Please note Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia 1788-1930 Newcastle: University of Newcastle, 2017-2022, <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.13/1340762> (accessed 27/06/2024) allege 6 Aboriginals killed.

<sup>37</sup> Telegraph 5 February 1883 p 2. See page 187 below.

<sup>38</sup> Brisbane Courier 12 March 1883 p 3.

<sup>39</sup> Brisbane Courier 13 May 1882 p 7.

<sup>40</sup> Brisbane Courier 27 November 1882 p 5.

<sup>41</sup> Queenslander 22 April 1882 p 498.

taken off the stations out here and then cut out hundreds of miles on. Hann was supported by Edward Palmer, the member for Burke, who also wrote to the Colonial Secretary on 10 January 1884 in support of a police station on the Nicholson to inspect the large numbers of cattle exiting Queensland because local cattle from the surrounding stations were being picked up and taken overland to the NT. This was an added cost for every station in the district. The Commissioner of Police was asked to advise on the matter and he recommended that one of the detachments at Carl Creek should be transferred to the Nicholson River.<sup>42</sup>

In answer to a question asked by Mr Palmer, in the Assembly on 5 November 1884, the Colonial Secretary said the Commissioner of Police had already been instructed to form a police station on the Nicholson River, and that the officer in charge of that station would inspect cattle crossing the border.<sup>43</sup> John Harvey Young, the Chairman of the Burke Divisional Board, on 26 May 1886 forwarded to the Chief Secretary a letter from the residents of the district west of the Gregory River and the Nicholson River requesting that a native police camp be established at Turn-off Lagoon, Nicholson River. The letter added that “the blacks are numerous, crafty and treacherous and horse stealing hitherto had been carried on with impunity”. They suggested that Sub-Inspector Lamond should take charge because he was also a Stock Inspector and could prevent stock, stolen or otherwise, from leaving the Colony.<sup>44</sup> In 1891, a police station was established at Turn-Off Lagoon, Burke district.

The aborigines continued to enter Thornborough. At any one time, there were over 200 blacks in town; they were becoming more impudent every day. The Government had been repeatedly wired on the subject, and when the Premier visited, he promised to do something for them. A sum of money was given to Inspector Carr, on the Barron River, a distance of fifty miles, but the Blacks Committee could not communicate with him, as he was always travelling about the Herberton district. The Blacks Committee held a meeting in December 1882 and resolved to break up the committee and have no more to do with it unless the Government placed the money in their hands, as they could do nothing as long as Carr had the money.<sup>45</sup>

On 14 July 1883, Ernest Carr, Sub-Inspector, Barron River wrote to the Colonial Secretary as follows:

According to your instructions, I have used my best endeavours to put the different tribes under subjection without using harsh measures with them and have so far succeeded that there are now several mobs in at the different townships and stations in the district; all of whom seem peaceably disposed towards the white population and their property.

There has now been no outrage committed in my district for the last six months except the murder of Mr Charles Desaley (sic, Desailly) who was himself entirely to blame for his untimely end. The black who speared Mr Desaley has since been killed by his tribe.

The expenditure up to the present time on the Walsh and Mitchell blacks has been comparatively small as the owners of stations have, in some instances, borne part of the expense of feeding them. The blacks now in are inducing others of their respective tribes to come in also, which will entail a little extra expense for a few months. It will take time before the blacks can be entrusted with sufficient confidence in the whites to enable them to be of any service, but I am in great hopes of having them thoroughly under subjection in twelve or eighteen months from now.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> QSA ITM847110 DR, 84/598. Brisbane Courier 12 June 1884 p 6.

<sup>43</sup> Brisbane Courier 6 November 1884 p 4.

<sup>44</sup> QSA ITM847200 DR78188, 86/4526.

<sup>45</sup> Week 13 January 1883 p 15.

<sup>46</sup> QSA ITM847097 DR77947, 83/3847.

In March 1884, the Cairns press ran a local news item on complaints made by settlers that the blacks were again making serious depredations among the cattle and horses in the Smithfield district, and also on the ranges near Boar's Pocket. The paper also noted that one selection, however, was rarely raided, notwithstanding its situation amidst numerous blacks. The secret of their immunity lay in food being supplied to the starving Aboriginals, and so removing the incentive to spear cattle. It recommended this plan to those who were suffering from the incursions of the natives, if not from policy, at least from some feeling of humanity.<sup>47</sup> By long immunity from punishment, the blacks were becoming very bold in their predations, and unless the district had a native police force established in a central position, more serious offences than thieving would be committed. The distance of the native police camp on the Upper Barron rendered that station useless for this district. If a camp was established on the Mulgrave, it would serve all the requirements of the settlers, as the blacks could then be driven from the localities after due notice had been given to the police. This had become an important matter for this district.<sup>48</sup> On 21 June 1885, the Cairns Progress Association sent a petition to the Colonial Secretary from the residents of Trinity Inlet, the Mulgrave, Russell and Barron Rivers and the packers travelling between Cairns and Herberton praying for the removal of the native police camp on the upper Barron to the Mulgrave reserve because of numerous depredations and the need for police protection from the blacks. The Police Commissioner advised the Colonial Secretary that the Barron River camp was central to the whole district and, if removed, would leave other areas exposed. He further observed that, since the Mulgrave had numerous selectors, he did not see a necessity for native police who were only employed in outside, sparsely settled areas.<sup>49</sup>

On 6 August 1884, the Commissioner of Police forwarded the police report of 1883 to the Colonial Secretary and advised:

I was in hope that during the past year, it would have been possible to remove some of the Native Police detachments from the coast districts, but I have not been able to do so. The settlers expect too much from the Native Police, and neglect to take ordinary precautions for the safety of their stock and other property; sometimes leaving their selections for weeks and months without any person in charge and then expressing great surprise at finding that their huts have been plundered or their stock speared and scattered. Where settlement is fairly close, Native Police should not be required.

## IRVINEBANK INCIDENT

Herberton, October 24, 1884. The bodies of Aboriginals, partially consumed by fire, were found about a mile and a half from Irvinebank, among whom were women and children. The Police Magistrate visited the locality, in company with the medical officer, to inquire into the matter. As a result of the magisterial inquiry held by Mr Mowbray, the Government dispensed with the services of Sub-Inspector W Nichols and the black trackers engaged in the raid were also dismissed.<sup>50</sup>

## THE TELEGRAPH — FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.

Herberton, October 31. Last week I alluded to the discovery of seven dead aborigines, half consumed by fire, alleged to have been 'dispersed.' Since then, a few miles from the same place two

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<sup>47</sup> Cairns Post 6 March 1884 p 2.

<sup>48</sup> Cairns Post 3 July 1884 p 2.

<sup>49</sup> QSA ITM847124 DR78009, 84/4487; ITM847137 DR78041, 84/7964.

<sup>50</sup> Telegraph 3 November 1884 p 2. Brisbane Courier 10 December 1884 p 4. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Wm. Nichols dismissed 15 November 1884, Qld PG Vol. XXI] 6 December 1884 [No. 25, p 257. The Irvinebank Massacre by Paul Dillon, Connor Court Publishing, Brisbane 2021. See p 115 below.

prospectors came across a blacks' camp in which they found a miscellaneous lot of stolen articles, including axes, tomahawks, rope, a woman's dress, &c., &c., showing the continuous depredations being perpetrated by the blacks. The necessity of checks against the blacks is very apparent, and however it may shock people, the episode near Irvinebank is the result of the system which precludes the possibility of discrimination. It is believed that the legalised 'dispersion' causes retaliation; my experience of the blacks is quite the reverse; theft is their predominant mania, and when they take life, it is with a view to robbery. The matter of the blacks is one that the North cannot argue with the South, simply because the South is not within reach of the wild blacks and they can conceive nothing that they are capable of doing. 'Dispersing' the thieving blacks in the north is considered very cruel, but despatching a man-of-war to burn down villages, and kill the populations with shells, is considered comme il faut by the more civilised people of the south.<sup>51</sup> What is required in these scrubby parts is native troopers under a modified system, so that whatever is done is above board. If 'dispersion,' as understood everywhere, be necessary, let the Government who orders it be responsible, but not, as now, issue certain instructions to officers, who are supposed to carry them out, but who, if unfortunately found out, become the victims. This is unfair and unjust. There must be special police protection against the darkies, or invasion and wholesale murder will ensue; how to organise that protection is difficult, without such events as the one near Irvinebank occurring. That the innocent often suffer for the guilty is true enough, but the recent murder of Morgan and Bailey has given work to troopers who are not prone to discriminating when on the warpath.<sup>52</sup>

A petition was signed by the selectors on the Mulgrave River and Trinity Inlet for the removal of the native police camp from the Upper Barron to a 970-acre reserve near Blackwell's selection to provide protection for the numerous settlers on the Russell, Mulgrave and Freshwater rivers, and Smithfield who were suffering depredations by the blacks.<sup>53</sup>

Letter to Editor of *Cairns Post* from a Mulgrave Settler.

...there has been a petition signed by the settlers of this district requesting that a native police camp be established on Mulgrave Reserve. At one time, I endeavoured to plant a few acres of potatoes on my selection, upon which I reckoned on making a good return. Just as they were near ripe for gathering, the whole of my patch had been cleared during the night. There had been no noise whatever, and the cunning these aborigines exercise is something wonderful. I made a second effort, and determined this time to keep a better watch for the safety of the crop, but I regret to say without success. I know of several of my neighbours who have been plundered in a similar manner until we are compelled to abandon the idea of cultivating our land. In fact, it becomes out of our power to do so, as each loss throws us backward. Now I would like to know how it is that we cannot get protection from this sort of loss? There is an extensive camp established on the Upper Barron, about 40 miles distant, under Inspector Carr, who seldom visits this district. When this occurs, however, he travels on the well-frequented tracks, so that no good is effected. What we require in this district is a camp at the Mulgrave, where two or three men could be sent in different directions to patrol on foot. What is the use of making a parade for these aborigines on horseback? They keep out of the way while the native police ride through the country, and as soon as they have left, the aborigines recommence their thieving. The distance of the camp on the Upper Barron renders it useless to this district, because the blacks can commit their depredations and retire. In the meantime, it would take a person two days riding to give notice of the depredation, and two days return, by which time the blacks have cleared off to parts impracticable to follow them.<sup>54</sup>

To the Editor of the *Cairns Post* from John Atherton, Emerald End, August 2, 1884.

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<sup>51</sup> The correspondent here is referring to the actions of the Royal Navy in the South Sea Islands. Refer KANAKA BOATS IS A-COMIN' PACIFIC ISLAND LABOURERS IN QUEENSLAND by Paul Dillon, 2023.

<sup>52</sup> Telegraph 10 November 1884 p 2.

<sup>53</sup> Cairns Post 29 May 1884 p 2.

<sup>54</sup> Cairns Post 3 July 1884 p 3, abridged.

Being a settler in the district over which Inspector Carr holds sway, and suffering great losses from the blacks, I applied to him for protection, but only received in reply an intimation that he and his troopers were stationed in the district to protect the blacks, not to punish them. I am not aware if this is the case, but if it is, I fail to see what use he is to the white population here, or would be to the Mulgrave settlers if transferred to their vicinity. But I have reason to believe that Inspector Carr studies his own pleasure rather than his duties, whatever they may be, and in substantiation of this opinion I can mention several recent dates when he has been absent for days together on pleasure excursions, and taken his troopers with him. I give three of these occasions. On 21 June he attended the Masonic Ball at Herberton, and was absent three to four days, taking with him his 2nd officer, 6 troopers, and 12 horses. I may here mention that Herberton is not in his district. Two or three days after his return, he went to Port Douglas, and attended the Bachelor's Ball, being absent 2 days, and again taking 6 troopers and 12 horses. On 10 July he proceeded to the Western, again visiting Herberton. My object in bringing this matter before the public is to show that a large sum of money is annually expended to keep up an establishment which is no protection or service to anyone. I speak feelingly on this subject, as my own losses from the depredations of the blacks have not been less than £1 per day for the past seven years, and latterly matters have been worse than ever. Trusting the publication of this letter will attract attention to the subject.<sup>55</sup>

The Commissioner of Police forwarded the police report of 1884 to the Colonial Secretary and advised:

The condition of the blacks on the coast and in the interior of the Cook District has become a matter of some concern. Settlement has advanced upon the tribes so rapidly that they have lost their hunting grounds, and have therefore been deprived of their only means of existence. The consequence has been the committal of depredations regarding which many complaints have reached the Department. While population was sparse, and large tracts of country were open to the aborigines, it was possible for the Police to keep them back from settlement; but, now, in driving them awry from one occupied locality, they merely are driven to another, and so they are prevented from obtaining their natural food. As settlement is increasing in the far northern districts daily, it will be necessary to consider what means will have to be adopted to protect the aborigines from starvation, and so end what is now a source of constant trouble between blacks and whites.

*Cairns Post*, 8 January 1885:

Inspector Carr, with his detachment, arrived here on Thursday last, 1st instant, and proceeded to the Mulgrave River on the 2nd instant. He returned yesterday after having inspected the scene of the murder of Donald McAulay. The difficulty of tracing the perpetrators of the murder is greatly increased by the elapsed time since the murder. Inspector Carr proceeds to-morrow to Double Island and Smithfield, where the black had been very troublesome of late. Since the murder of Donald McAulay, the blacks have mustered in strong force on the Russell, and are assuming a very defiant attitude towards the settlers on the river, who are feeling very insecure. There is no doubt that unless protection is promptly afforded, we shall have a record of further murders committed by these aborigines. The selectors on this river are very scattered, and the homesteads far apart, which renders them easy to attack, and increases the danger. A settler arriving in town informs that during the past week Surveyor Munro's camp was pillaged by a mob and a large quantity of rations stolen. There was nobody in the camp at the time, which, perhaps, was fortunate, as had there been only one or two men left in charge, they would probably have been attacked. A petition is being signed by the settlers of the Russell and Mulgrave Rivers, urging for native police protection, and will be forwarded to Brisbane by an early mail.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Cairns Post 7 August 1884 p 2. Queensland Figaro 23 August 1884 p 9.

<sup>56</sup> Morning Bulletin 15 January 1885 p 5.

Petition for Police Protection. Mr Fred T Wimble, the hon secretary of the Cairns Progress Association, has received from the settlers of the Mulgrave and Russell rivers the following petition, which has been forwarded to the Colonial Secretary:

That on account of our isolated situation—scattered as we are over a large district, miles away, in most cases, from our neighbours, and in a dense scrub—we are entitled to police protection of some sort. That two of our number have been murdered by the blacks within the last six months,<sup>57</sup> and that the properties of others have been constantly entered upon in the absence of the lessees at their work and robbed of their contents. That we would desire to call your attention to the neglect of neighbouring selectors in not taking the legitimate share in the difficulties and dangers consequent on taking up new country, causing additional and unjust hardships on your petitioners. This latter grievance is largely attributable to the Lands Department in not having selections surveyed and confirmed within a reasonable time; some of the selectors on the Russell having been nearly three years granted and not yet surveyed, while others have been surveyed but have not been confirmed, which some selectors take advantage of at the last moment, thereby making the difficulties of the legitimate settler much more dangerous as before pointed out. The nearest police station (native), is over 30 miles from here, and is perfectly useless to us in the way of protection. Russell and Mulgrave Rivers, January 10, 1885.<sup>58</sup>

*Cairns Post* 12 February:

Sub-Inspector Garraway is now camped on the Mulgrave River, and the native troopers are patrolling that part of the district as well as the Russell. There is no doubt this will have the effect of dispersing the blacks in these parts for some little time, but as soon as the aborigines find the troopers have left, they will return to the scene, and doubtless commence murdering settlers as well as committing depredations as before. It is a farce to imagine that the native police force visiting and patrolling the district occasionally affords anything further than a temporary protection to the settlers. It is not until there is a permanent camp established — say at the head of the Mulgrave, from which a regular patrol of the whole district could be made — that any security to the pioneer settlers will be afforded. For the last nine months, we have pointed out the necessity for native police protection to the authorities in Brisbane, which have been entirely ignored by them. An occasional telegram has appeared in the daily papers, after such instances as the murder of Donald McAulay, that Sub-Inspector So-and-So has been ordered, &c., with the usual red tape phraseology, and nothing more is done. The cannibal blacks of the North are not awed by that, and it will require prompt action on the part of the authorities if settlement is to be successfully carried through by the pioneers who open up these new countries.<sup>59</sup>

G L Rutherford, Chairman of the Douglas Divisional Board, wired the Colonial Secretary on 14 March 1885:

News arrived here last night of selector's homestead on Mossman only about five and a half miles from town being stuck-up by blacks and the owner a young man well known and highly respected carried away by the blacks.<sup>60</sup> The blacks were traced by blood marks last night till dark, party left here this morning at 3 o'clock, no news in from them yet. Last week Ryan's camp on Saltwater Creek was stuck-up by the blacks, the previous week Leach's camp on Mossman was also stuck-up,<sup>61</sup> in both instances, the camp being robbed of nearly everything; must protest on behalf of the district against removal of native troopers. It is absolutely necessary that troopers be stationed in this district

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<sup>57</sup> John Conway, Russell River and Donald McAulay, Mulgrave River.

<sup>58</sup> Cairns Post 29 January 1885 p 3.

<sup>59</sup> Cairns Post 12 February 1885 p 2.

<sup>60</sup> This appears to be AS Bernard. See page 123 below.

<sup>61</sup> R Leach advised the Colonial Secretary on 2 April 1885 that his camp on the Mossman was robbed on three occasions and cleared of everything.

to patrol Mossman, Saltwater, and Daintree Rivers. Troopers now here would request you to instruct that they remain here.<sup>62</sup>

The Tinaroo Progress Association forwarded the following petition, which was hugely supported by the community, including large numbers of miners, to the Colonial Secretary on 6 March 1885:

That several murders and numerous outrages were committed by Aboriginals in this district prior to the establishment of the Native Police Camp at Nigger Creek; and that even with the protection then afforded, it was unsafe to travel any distance beyond the various points of settlement therein without carrying firearms.

That since the virtual breaking up of the before-mentioned Camp, and the departure of Sub-Inspector Carr for the Mulgrave and Russell Rivers, the Miners and Settlers in the outside portions of this district (who are scattered over country more than forty miles in extent) have been absolutely deprived of the Police Protection necessary for the safe and successful carrying out of their respective operations.

That the active patrol of the Mulgrave and Russell Rivers, and the probable rush to the Johnstone, will drive the Aboriginals from those localities to this district, in which recent mineral discoveries have given a great impetus to prospecting and extension of settlement.

That a feeling of insecurity has sprung from the circumstances before stated, and that all the experienced and observant residents consider increased police protection necessary for the preservation of life and property and the vigorous prosecution of the several industries in which they are engaged.

We therefore confidently hope you will recognise the reasonableness of our request for a fresh contingent of police at the Nigger Creek Station.

The petition was referred to the Police Commissioner for comment. He recommended the rejection of the petition for the following reasons:

The (Nigger Creek) camp is too close to the township, settlers and miners are in sufficient proximity to protect themselves. Native police were never intended for settled districts but for outside country. The only crimes committed by blacks in the district are petty thefts from huts left unprotected. There are now white police stations at Herberton, Watsonville, and Irvinebank. I propose stationing trackers at these stations.

The Tinaroo Progress Association replied to the government's proposals by questioning the assessment of the district as settled. The association pointed out that protection was needed for the numerous miners and settlers who were scattered over country more than forty miles in extent who could not protect themselves. They argued that active patrols of the outside districts were required, which was demonstrated by the removal of the Nigger Creek native police. Since their departure, depredations by the blacks had increased alarmingly.

The matter was returned to the Police Commissioner, who consulted Inspector Isley, Port Douglas. The Commissioner's response of 19 May 1885 was:

As I have already pointed out, the blacks are deprived of their natural means of existence by the settlement of whites both on the grazing lands and in the scrubs on the coast country and the difficulty will not be solved by increasing the police force in those districts, unless at the same time measures are adopted to provide for the legitimate wants of the aborigines. I forward a report from Inspector Isley, who is in charge of the district in which he recommends the formation of additional native police stations. This will be very costly and will not, I am convinced, have the desired effect since the blacks will take food wherever they can get it. The arrest of the depredators will not be

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<sup>62</sup> QSA ITM847168 DR78110, 85/6952.

possible and even the most deeply injured settler would hardly demand that the blacks should be shot down for resisting capture for any charge short of a capital offence.

The Colonial Secretary was not satisfied with the Commissioner's response and asked him to reconsider the matter. The Commissioner responded:

In accordance with your minute dated 20 May last requesting me to report as to the best means of substituting white Police with Trackers for Native Police, and to submit a scheme of stations and estimate of probable cost, I forward to you, a map of the Colony illustrating the proposed change together with a table showing the present cost of the Native Police and the estimated cost of the future arrangement.

I would, however, point out that I do not consider it advisable to make this alteration in the newly selected districts in the far North and West, the population there being sparse, the extent of country to be patrolled too great, and the aborigines too numerous to be properly looked after by small detachments, besides the difficulty of keeping the several small stations, which would be required, properly supplied. On the coast country and the more settled districts the mixed force, although costly, may be found to work well, if the proper stamp of Constables can be procured, but I fear that in this some considerable difficulty will be experienced, as the men appointed to those stations besides being steady Constables and good bushmen, must have the knack of retaining and working the Trackers.

Of the last two qualifications, I find that many otherwise very good men are totally deficient, and I fear that several changes will have to be made and many desertions of the trackers will occur before any benefit can be derived from the proposed arrangement. The Native Police are of little use in the suppression of crime other than that committed by blacks. The force which it is proposed to substitute will be the ordinary Police of the Colony, and although the strength at each station will not be so great, the number of stations will be much larger, and the facility for the apprehension of criminals increased in proportion, especially if the stations are so arranged as to be within telegraphic communication.

The Native Police Force at present consists of 13 detachments, of one Sub-Inspector, one campkeeper, and from six to ten troopers. The annual cost exclusive of horses, arms, and clothing, as you will observe from the table enclosed is £10,606 18 0. It is now proposed to break up eight out of the thirteen detachments and to substitute nineteen stations with one senior constable, one constable and three native trackers at each. The positions of the proposed stations are shown on the plan herewith but are of course liable to such alterations as may be found desirable after consultation with the officers in charge of the districts. The cost of maintenance of each station, exclusive of horses, arms and clothing you will find on the accompanying table, which I have prepared for your information. The change if decided upon will take a considerable time to complete as suitable buildings will have to be erected, the cost of which I estimate at about £10,000 exclusive of paddocks, the fencing of which will amount to a considerable sum but which cannot be avoided.

I would take this opportunity of again bringing under the notice of the Government, the fact of the aborigines being pushed out of their hunting grounds by the rapid settlement of the land and the impossibility of preventing depredations being committed by them, no matter what force of Police is employed. The blacks are now deprived of their means of existence and naturally enough when in want of food will kill whatever they come across. It would be useless to direct the Police to arrest them, for to carry out such orders every black in the Colony would have to be made a prisoner and even the most deeply injured settler would hardly expect them to be shot down for merely killing cattle or stealing food.

While settlement was sparse and large tracts of country were open to the aborigines, it was possible for the Police to keep them back from the settlers, but now in driving them back from one occupied locality they merely are driven to another and so they are prevented from obtaining their natural food and hence a source of constant trouble. The question of dealing with the aborigines has now, I beg to submit, assumed such an importance as to require very serious consideration and some legislative action.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> QSA ITM847159 DR78089, 85/4592.

*Cairns Post*, 16 April:

The incessant raids made by the blacks lately, and still in active progress all over the far North, raises serious apprehension that no European pioneer can now venture beyond the strict boundary of police protection or martial law, except on strict condition of literally carrying his life in his hand. Attention has been so frequently drawn to this threadbare subject that it seems an almost idle waste of words so far as the police authorities and the Government are concerned to raise a finger asking for protection. The truth is, the aboriginal is becoming more and more audacious in his attacks, knowing well the weakness of the settlers' position, who has to fight single-handed against cunning at great odds. The latest attack brought under our notice is that made on Mr Jamieson at Double Island the other day, a mob surrounding his homestead, brandishing spears, demanding rations, tobacco, and other luxuries in threatening terms. Their demands being so far complied with under pressure, they dragged the housekeeper to the kitchen, threatening her life; but fortunately, one of the men employed on the estate appeared in the nick of time, and he had to take the law into his own hands for self-protection. The man seized a revolver, and it was not until he had wounded two or three of the assailants that they showed any sign of making themselves scarce; after which they made a raid on the cattle and horses, and succeeded in spearing one horse, which died from the effects of the spear wounds. They also broke into a storeroom which they believed contained provisions, but their disappointment was so great that they chopped up the ropes and sails contained in the store. In their exit from Mount Buchan, they came across Mr Fallon's cattle and speared two of them. We have been told pretty often of late that there is but one law here for the white and the black, both having to undergo the same ordeal when indicted for a crime or misdemeanour. We contend that it is absurd on the face of it to expect a blackfellow to be apprehended by force or warrant if he murdered the entire population of a district. Where is McAulay's murderer? Or the bloodthirsty wretches who killed a man on the Daintree only the other day? This veneer of civilisation which has been attempted with the best intent in Cooktown has not been a success, for we believe those who attacked Mr Jamieson's house spoke English and hailed from the latter place. It has been suggested that the entire Northern population of blacks so far as practicable should be massed together towards the north of Double Island, on an area of country admirably suited for a hunting ground, the seaboard yielding plenty of fish, shells, &c. The native police, if they are to be of any use at all beyond the ornamental, ought to be able to patrol regularly, and see that their charge is kept strictly within a certain boundary. The present state of things is becoming intolerable.<sup>64</sup>

Inspector Isley arrived at Cairns on 28 November 1885 to arrange the new native police camp on the Mulgrave River reserve. The camp would consist of a senior-constable, a constable, and three black trackers, and was the first of the kind under the new system to supersede the present native police. The charge of the new camp was given to Senior-Constable Whelan. His sphere of action will comprise the Mulgrave, Russell, and Lower Barron rivers to Double Island and the districts they include. Senior-Sergeant Halloran arrived on 2 December from Townsville to take over the charge of the Cairns police station from Senior-Constable Whelan.<sup>65</sup>

Turning now to the northern districts of Cook and Burke, on 16 February 1885, Henry R Jones of Boralga, Laura wrote to S W Griffiths about Aboriginal attacks on his cattle:

Will you kindly read the enclosed cuttings from the *Cooktown Independent* of 14 February? I beg of you most respectfully to take my earnest and solemn warning that if some decisive steps are not taken at once to put a stop to these black raids, some of us will lose our lives, as the blacks are growing bolder and more mischievous every day. They are certainly wiser about here now than they were years ago, as any mischief they do now is done with perfect impunity, at least as far as the native police are concerned. Since I last wrote you, I have been compelled to remove all my cattle from off the Deighton to Koolburra, as after my heavy losses last year I really cannot afford to stand another wet season feeding blacks on cheap beef. Seeing that my cattle camp on the Deighton is about four

<sup>64</sup> Cairns Post 16 April 1885 p 2.

<sup>65</sup> Cairns Post 3 December 1885 p 2.

miles from Sub-Inspector Marretts' quarters, this fact alone should speak volumes as to the manner he acts as protector of us and our stock.

I think Sir, in common fairness as head of the government, will admit that I am entitled to compensation by having my rent knocked off Deighton country for some time to come, at any rate until we get proper protection from the blacks. Should this communication meet with no better fate than my previous ones have done, I mean, of course, as far as actual redress goes. I shall be forced to believe that Inspector Fitzgerald's boast to me was true, when I told him long ago that for his own sake, he was foolish that he did not keep his officers up to their work as in the long run people would not stand it and it would recoil on him. He said his back was too broad, his position too good no matter what the public said or thought, it could not hurt him. Bearing in mind what my loses have been last year together with the fact that I have had two very narrow escapes of being speared by the blacks lately, I think your own good sense will force you to admit that I have had and still have good cause for my complaints and trust that whatever you decide is to be done may it be done quickly as in the meantime we are being impoverished almost daily by our loses in stock being killed and crippled and what is still worse driven all over the country.<sup>66</sup>

On 2 May 1885, the graziers and other residents petitioned the government for a native police station on the main road between Normanton and Palmerville, known as Burns Crossing, Staaten River because there was no police protection between the lower Mitchell and the lower Gilbert Rivers and extending from the seacoast inland for a considerable distance, and that frequent and destructive raids by aborigines were made not only on the stock of the settlers but also on the settlers endangering their lives. The Commissioner of Police advised that a native police detachment was transferred from Glendhu to Highbury.<sup>67</sup>

F L Nott of Windermere Plantation, Bundaberg, on 8 September 1885 wrote to the Colonial Secretary regarding police protection for their station on the Archer River, Cape York, reminding the minister that Emberly's camp on the Batavia had been attacked by the blacks. The Commissioner of Police advised that Sub-Inspector Margetts had been ordered to Lalla Rookh and then to form a police camp at Coen which would patrol the Archer.<sup>68</sup>

The Colonial Secretary, Sir Samuel Griffith, in the Supply debate of 1885 said, hon members would observe that the 128 native troopers provided for last year were now called "native trackers," indicating an intention on the part of the Government to make a change in the administration of the native police branch of the force. The system, which had been adopted hitherto, by which a comparatively large number of native police were accompanied by only one white officer, was not at all satisfactory. He should be very glad if the Government could see their way to abolish the native police altogether, and there were many parts of the colony where they were no longer required and where the work could be done quite as well and, in some respects, better by white men, except perhaps, tracking. There were, however, other parts of the colony, he was bound to admit having struggled all he could to see his way to abolish the native police altogether, where white troopers could not penetrate. For instance, in the northern jungles, it was impossible for a white man to get through. It was, therefore, impossible to abolish them altogether, and what was proposed to be done was that in all cases at least two white police should be attached to every detachment of native police; and by degrees, the whole system would be abolished. That was as far as he was at present able to see his way to make a change in the system. Very numerous complaints had been made of late from various parts of the North about the depredations by

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<sup>66</sup> QSA ITM847153 DR78077, 85/3053. This file relates to Jones's complaint against Marrett, which the police rejected and in turn accused Jones of sour grapes over a cancelled contract to supply beef, Brisbane Courier 29 November 1884 p 5.

<sup>67</sup> QSA ITM847153 DR78077, 85/3021. Highbury was on the Mitchell River.

<sup>68</sup> QSA ITM847170 DR78115, 85/7418.

blacks, and urgent requests had been made that something should be done to prevent them; sometimes it meant to be revenged upon them.

Where, however, lives had been taken something, of course, must be done; but he did not think the native police ought to be employed to avenge the killing of cattle and horses. The Government had been unable to meet all the requests that had been made. It must not be forgotten that the progress of settlement in the North had been of such a nature as to destroy the food supply of the blacks to a very great extent, especially where they were very numerous; and it was not to be wondered at that they occasionally helped themselves to the settlers' stock. He could quite sympathise with them when they were suffering from starvation. Some stations were left in charge of a stockman and a couple of blackboys, and the owners expected the native police to act as stock-riders for them. That was no part of the duties of the native police; and considering the owners were put to so little expense in managing their stations, they might very fairly allow a bullock now and then to sustain the life of the aboriginal inhabitants, whose means of subsistence had been taken from them.

The hon J M Macrossan said he would like to know whether the camps for native troopers would be the same as hitherto and whether it was intended that there should be two white constables with each detachment of native police in addition to the officer in charge.

The Colonial Secretary said there would always be two white constables at a camp, and sometimes a senior-constable would be in charge. There were to be the same camps or police stations, not in charge of an officer, but of a senior-constable or sergeant, with a smaller number of black trackers. The practice of the black police making raids through the country in times past would not be allowed any longer.<sup>69</sup>

C L Hill, the member for Cook, forwarded on 30 December 1885 a petition from the European and Chinese residents and miners of Maytown and the Palmer goldfield for police protection against the blacks:

While no less than three strong detachments of native police are quartered within a radius of less than thirty miles of Cooktown, the only force available for the protection of this district is one detachment at Palmerville, which has to patrol 150 miles below the district and 70 miles above the district, besides the cattle stations on the Palmer, Mitchell and Walsh Rivers. Within the last twelve months, eight Chinese miners on the Fine Gold and Stoney Creeks have been speared and eaten by the savages; a large number of horses destroyed and Europeans and Chinese driven from the rich reefs on the Mitchell. The memorialists ask that a small detachment of native police be stationed on the St George or Mitchell Rivers.

On 21 January 1886, the Police Commissioner advised that "a detachment of native police at Glenroy near Palmerville, patrolled up and down the river and that another police station was on the Mitchell and trackers would be attached to ordinary police stations in the Palmer district."<sup>70</sup>

The detachment of native troopers under Sub-Inspector White at Cannibal Creek was considered a judicious move, as the blacks would be kept in check in the outside districts. Such places as Stony, Granite, Fine Gold, and Limestone would be thickly populated were it not for the raids made from time to time by the darkies, rendering life and property far from secure.<sup>71</sup> Since the police have been removed from Cannibal Creek, said the *Palmer Chronicle*, "Boot and Saddle" was

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<sup>69</sup> Hansard LA, 24 September 1885 p 825-826.

<sup>70</sup> QSA ITM847184 DR78147, 86/552.

<sup>71</sup> Brisbane Courier 8 March 1886 p 3.

the watchword at Limestone, for the blacks had again commenced to play up. They started with a couple of horses, one belonging to Mr Harbord and the other to a Chinaman, but their little game was interfered with and the blacks did not feast on horse flesh that time.<sup>72</sup>

From the *Queenslander* of 13 March 1886:

The Johnstone River Blacks. Our informant, who is the manager of an estate near the Johnstone River diggings, states that he had been away from the house for about half an hour when his Chinese cook came and informed him that the blacks were robbing the homestead. He returned to the place immediately and found that the blacks had taken not only his clothes but also a lot of rations, a Winchester repeating rifle, a Snider carbine, and all the ammunition. He at once gave chase, following up their tracks and found some of the stolen things, but he could not get hold of the fellows with the arms and ammunition. He was out all Sunday and Monday, but could not recover any more of the stolen goods. On Tuesday morning, he returned home and within half an hour afterwards, whilst all the men were away at work and he was at the kitchen about a chain and a half away from the house, he saw two blacks enter the dwelling. He ran up and caught one in the act of taking a revolver—the only firearm left. The black had possession of it but he made a rush, closed with the thief, and a desperate struggle ensued. Other blacks joined in the fight and stoned the white man, but he regained the revolver and beat off his assailants. So badly did the black marauders beat our informant; he was invalided in bed for several days. He reported the matter to the police magistrate, who, with commendable promptitude, communicated with the Commissioner of Police and Sub-Inspector Garraway with troopers was despatched to the scene of the depredations. On the very same day that the myalls stuck up our informant, they made a raid on an Innisfail plantation, which is within a short distance of Geraldton, and kidnapped a Singhalese boy. A relief party with the assistance of two native troopers rescued the Singhalese boy from the myalls, who were heating a stone oven wherein to roast their victim for a great feast. The police have, it is stated, only patrolled this district once in twelve months. Those selectors located at the extreme back of the Johnstone, near the diggings, are so harassed by the blacks that it is almost next to impossible now to induce bailiffs to remain on the selections, and therefore the selectors have applied to the Government for and obtained six months' exemption. Our informant states that, to his knowledge, four Chinese have been killed and eaten by the blacks during the past twelve months.

It was in this district that Surveyor Bryce and party were stuck up by the blacks some short time ago. The Johnstone River or Bartle Frere diggings are close to the selection of which our informant is the manager, and he says that prospecting by Europeans is paralysed by the blacks. Unless the diggers go in parties of ten or a dozen, it is not safe. The Chinese prospect and work in parties of about twenty to awe the blacks by numbers; but if one leaves camp alone, he is in danger of being seized and eaten. All the diggers say it is the best-looking country for gold they were ever in, but the scrub and the blacks are "terrors."<sup>73</sup>

Cairns, June 12. The blacks had been quiet in this district for a long time. About 100 of them came into Cairns and some camped in town at night. They did not bring in their gins, and therefore, still regarded the whites with distrust. They cut wood and did odd jobs for the townspeople in return for "budgeree ki ki". Senior-Constable Whelan was in charge of the native police camp on the Mulgrave and kept the myalls in check. Inspector Carr's expensive and perfectly useless camp on the Upper Barron was, very properly, abolished.<sup>74</sup>

The Commissioner of Police advised in his annual report of 1886:

The arrangement that was proposed some time ago of substituting white police with native trackers in lieu of the native police has been tried during the last year, and stations of this description were formed on the Laura, Moresby, and Mulgrave Rivers, and so far, the new system has worked

<sup>72</sup> Queensland Figaro and Punch 24 July 1886 p 13.

<sup>73</sup> Queenslander 13 March 1886 p 427.

<sup>74</sup> Brisbane Courier 21 June 1886 p 3.

satisfactorily; and I am arranging other similar stations, thus reducing the native police by degrees. The erection of the telegraph line to Thursday Island and the settlement of the country in the Cape York Peninsula will before long necessitate the establishment of native police camps further north than they are at present. In my report for the year 1884, I mentioned that the police in Brisbane had been armed with the Martini-Henri Rifle; since then, I have received a further supply from England, which has enabled me to substitute this rifle for the Snider in all the coast and many of the large inland towns in the Colony.

On 18 May 1887, J S McIntyre of Toowoomba wrote to the Colonial Secretary on behalf of R F Walker, a selector on the Mulgrave River, that the blacks were very troublesome and had been for some time robbing homesteads and stealing crops, such as corn, very boldly, and that the protection of the native police was urgently required. Seymour, Commissioner of Police, advised that there was a detachment of police (mixed) on the Mulgrave River and no complaints had been made by residents of any depredations by blacks.<sup>75</sup> Reports of petty larcenies by the blacks and annoyances by them in the Russell River district had also come to hand. The good done by the black troopers under Sergeant Whelan in maintaining order was considerably discounted by certain white persons in the locality harbouring gins belonging to the tribes. This was an excuse for blackfellows in the neighbourhood, and depredations were inevitable.<sup>76</sup>

14 July. Sub-Inspector Garraway and his four black troopers, who went to Atherton to investigate the Aborigines, were unsuccessful. He followed one party and another followed him, both knowing exactly where he was, and how exhausted his party and horses were. The party in the van led him away from a store to be looted, and the rear party proceeded immediately to it. [They marched boldly up to Mr Kelly's store and demanded from Mrs Kelly billies, tobacco, and blankets.] Sub-Inspector Garraway, on being informed of what had taken place in his absence, expressed no surprise, as his experience had taught him that he and his contingent were more vigilantly watched by the blacks than the former can watch the latter. The settlers wanted to know how long this absurd game of chevy chase was likely to last.<sup>77</sup>

The depredations caused by the blacks in Herberton district had become so serious that action needed to be taken to protect the selectors. In the Barron Valley, the losses of property stolen by the Aborigines caused selectors to petition the Minister for Lands for permission to abandon their selections for twelve months.<sup>78</sup> A case in point was Mr M J McCarthy, who left his selection, situated on the Upper Barron, 27 miles from Cairns, and returned to town. He left two men on the homestead, John Johnson and George. Johnson woke to see a blackfellow grasping a double-barrelled breech-loader which lay alongside his bunk. He yelled out, and the black ran off. Johnson took a snap shot at him, which hit the thief, though not fatally. It was afterwards found that an axe had also been stolen. Whilst Mr Colley and Mr Jackson, selectors in the neighbourhood, were engaged in constructing a fence, a blackfellow entered a small humpy kept for storing corn. A dog gave the alarm; the whites saw the blackfellow disappear with an axe. That gentleman considered the only remedy was to despatch an efficient body of native police to the place and punish the blacks for these and other robberies in the vicinity and at Atherton.<sup>79</sup>

#### LETTER TO THE EDITOR — THE BLACKS AND THE SELECTOR.

I am living two miles from the camp of the native police of this district; I have some cultivation at the main Cairns-Herberton and Mulgrave Road, close by my house. Yet the blacks have been robbing

<sup>75</sup> QSA ITM847220 DR78242, 87/1289.

<sup>76</sup> Cairns Post 28 May 1887 p 2.

<sup>77</sup> Brisbane Courier 4 August 1887 p 3. Darling Downs Gazette 3 August 1887 p 3.

<sup>78</sup> QSA ITM847259 DR84056, 87/9775

<sup>79</sup> Cairns Post 26 October 1887 p 3.

me of the little I could raise. My intention was to start planting tobacco. I have not been able to gather a single pound of tobacco leaf; and all other planters in this district and on the Russell have failed too. Those few plants that each of us had been able to raise were not one excepted, taken away by the blacks. I have not one single plant left for seed. They wanted a smoke, and they took my tobacco; they were hungry and took my potatoes and pumpkins; whatever they wanted, they took. I have left the old country and dear friends, come thousands of miles away, worked harder than in any time of my life, and have now spent my money, only to realise that all that was of no good to me; it only replenished the stomachs of my coloured brethren and satisfied their craving for a smoke. At that rate, the day will soon come in which I shall not have the wherewith to satisfy my wants; I shall have grown older, wasted my strength and capital, and be helpless. Of course, I must not steal like the blacks or I shall go to prison. Is this the sort of life that the Government is paving to deceive immigrants who might trust its bona fides in promoting and protecting intending agriculturists? Two miles from a police camp turns out to be no better than 100 miles.

Sergeant Whelan with only three or four troopers is sent so often to Herberton, to the Russell, anywhere, that he cannot give protection to selectors two miles from his camp! What economy is this? There is money that can be spent on Defence Forces, but we cannot afford to keep an efficient body of police to keep in check the enemy that slowly but surely robs and impoverishes us. No One. Cairns, 10 November 1887.

[We would suggest to our correspondent that he try and make use of the native blacks to help him forward with his work. This is done by Mr George Hislop at Weary Bay, at the mission station, Bloomfield River; at the Saltwater River by Mr DeCourcey; and at other places. The blacks in all these localities were considered quite as savage as in any other district of the North. To call upon the Native Police is tantamount to requesting to have the blacks shot; to shoot them solely for taking produce grown upon land that has been stolen from them seems rather hard lines and smacks too much of the custom of past years when they were shot down right and left because they speared a few of the squatters' bullocks. Think the matter over as to how you can overcome their fear of you, and, once gain their confidence, you will find you can get a good deal of scrub-felling and burning done by them for merely a dole of food, and they will then always respect your crops. — ED. Q.]<sup>80</sup>

On 1 November 1887, W B Kelly, on behalf of the selectors on the Upper Barron Valley, wrote to the Colonial Secretary advising the Aboriginals were becoming so daring and their robberies so frequent, it was almost impossible to live on their farms. They could not leave their houses, even protected with bolts and bars, without an armed guard on duty. There was no prospect of returns from their cultivations because of black thieves. Periodic visits by black police were useless. The only solution was to bring the blacks in and feed them.<sup>81</sup>

On 26 November 1887, Inspector A Morisset at Port Douglas replied to the June 1887 petition to the Colonial Secretary from the settlers of the parish of Barron near Atherton.

During the past 12 months up to this date, the small settlers have been considerably harassed by the petty thieving of the aborigines. It appears to me, however, that too much has been made of the depredations by the blacks and the difficulties and dangers to the settlers arising therefrom. The settlers are mostly poor and their homes or establishments are of a very primitive class; while working in their cultivation patches or clearing the scrub, take slight precautions for the safety of their belongings, while the blacks in small parties prowl round watching their opportunities for petty thieving.

As settlement advances, the aborigines are compelled to retire to the scrubs and ranges. The settlers exhibit a strong disinclination to the presence of the natives in their vicinity and whenever they show themselves, requisition the police to hunt them back. Great stress is laid by the petitioners upon the statement that the blacks have taken to stealing firearms and ammunition, but I have not been made aware of one instance in which the blacks have used firearms; or have resorted to actual violence against the settlers during their predatory visits. I have on the other hand, reports in my office by the

<sup>80</sup> Queenslander 26 November 1887 p 858.

<sup>81</sup> QSA ITM847276 DR78397, 88/4237

settlers in which it is stated that they and their employees have seen the blacks stealing sweet potatoes etc. from cultivation patches and in one instance removing clothes from a line. In this latter case, the barking of a dog sufficed to intimidate and disperse them. In such cases, it is only reasonable to expect the settlers to adopt measures for their protection.

The blacks throughout this division have opportunities to communicate with the white races and acquire a knowledge of the probable danger to themselves in the event of firearms being used against them and naturally when in the course of their raids upon the unprotected dwellings they come across arms, they remove them with a view of obviating retaliation of the whites. I am confirmed in this view by the reports of the officers that upon the rare occasions on which they have come upon firearms in the hands of the natives; they have invariably been ineffective. The ammunition is still more rarely found in the hands of the natives.

With limited strength in men and horses of the native police in this division, it is impossible to maintain so close a watch upon the aborigines as the signators (sic) to the petition appear to demand. I feel confident that on reference to the duty returns of the officers during the last twelve months, you will be satisfied with their acknowledging all requisitions for services; and the frequency of patrols by the Barron River camp and Mulgrave. A Morisset.<sup>82</sup>

From 1885 to 1888, the Queensland gunboat *Paluma* made an extensive survey of the Queensland coast between Cardwell and Whitsunday Island. Arising out of this work, the following document was referred to the Commissioner of Police, "Report from Lieutenant Commander Richards of murder and cannibalism among natives of Palm Island".<sup>83</sup>

Mr Bentley, resident of Palm Island, said small vessels occasionally land at Palm Island and crews have sexual intercourse with native women. Two young men sought to control this traffic and receive the trade instead of the women. A gin objected to this and was immediately strangled by Jimmy and Sammy. An old man remonstrated with the boys and was promptly strangled. No further objection was raised by the tribe. Portions of the bodies were eaten by the boys, with the remains of the bodies buried on the beach. Mr Bentley proceeded to Townsville and reported the matter but the police took no action.<sup>84</sup>

Inspector Isley of Townsville advised the Commissioner by wire in October 1887:

Bentley made verbal report some time since, thought but little of it. It escaped my memory. Took no steps in the matter; could spare no men to go on wild goose chase after evidence and if obtained and arrests made no chance of conviction. No good could possibly arise and I let matter pass.<sup>85</sup>

The Colonial Secretary when confronted with the 1887-8 estimates for the Queensland police force, asked the Commissioner of Police to furnish a return setting out the reasons for so large an increase in the estimates. On 29 August 1888, the Commissioner advised the Colonial Secretary that an increasing population and a greater demand for police stations in newly opened districts in the north contributed to the increase. However, what was of interest in the report was an accurate statement of the makeup of the native police, as per the table below.<sup>86</sup>

Native Police as at 29 August 1888.

| Officers | Campkeepers | Trackers | Cost per annum |
|----------|-------------|----------|----------------|
| 10       | 17          | 96       | £10,622 3. 8.  |

<sup>82</sup> QSA ITM847259 DR84056, 87/9775.

<sup>83</sup> QSA ITM847250 DR78320, 87/7956.

<sup>84</sup> QSA ITM847252 DR78324, 87/8237.

<sup>85</sup> QSA ITM847252 DR78324, 87/8237.

<sup>86</sup> QSA ITM847288 DR69594, 88/7767.

Continued agitation, together with relentless complaint making, was kept up by the settlers of the Barron Valley district over aboriginal thievery and destructive habits. The Commissioner of Police advised the Colonial Secretary:

It is proposed to station police at Atherton as soon as quarters can be procured, but I am sure that they will be of very little use so long as the settlers leave their selections unprotected, as they frequently do. See Mr Tillman's letter, "it is impossible to catch these wild myalls and punish them as you would tame blacks." This is quite true but the severe measures hinted at could not be resorted to by the police.<sup>87</sup>

No sooner had the Commissioner established a native police camp at Paterson on the tip of Cape York Peninsula than the complaints came in:

Batavia River  
Cape York, 19 July 1888

Sub-Inspector Poingdestre, Paterson

Paterson site is one hundred miles away from the nearest cattle station and in a place where blacks are now quite civilised and again for 9 months out of 12 it is impossible for police to render any assistance as the Jardine River, 28 miles south of the site is always a swim and the country for months all boggy and will not carry horses and again the blacks are only bad south of the Ducie River and in the middle of the cattle stations, probable gold and tin fields. We suggest for consideration a site on the Ducie or Batavia Rivers at the head of the navigation; you would then be 117 miles from Cape York and 110 miles from Coen and about halfway between the east and west coasts. From either place you can get any part of the peninsula. Signed Batavia Downs, Merluna Station, York Downs, Pine Tree, Meta Downs, Mein Tele station, Moreton Tele station and McDonnell Tele station.<sup>88</sup>

The *Brisbane Courier* of 15 September 1888 ran the following editorial:

A correspondent forwarded a description of atrocities of alleged frequent occurrence in the Northern districts, the bare recital of which is enough to make one's ears tingle. Our correspondent is a well-known pressman, who has done a bit of exploiting both in Australasia and New Guinea, who admits that he has himself shot natives who would otherwise have shot him, and of whom we can readily believe that, as he says, he is "not particularly prejudiced in favour of the natives or very soft-hearted."<sup>89</sup> His indictment touches mainly the districts lying between Cairns and Georgetown, where, he says, the blacks are being decimated by Government servants in the shape of black troopers and their masters, whose "dispersion" of the aborigines in particular localities has come to mean their slaughter. He speaks of men being kept for the sole purpose of hunting and killing the aborigines; he gives instances of their camps being surrounded, and men, women, and children massacred for killing cattle, when, through the white man's presence, they could no longer find game; and he tells in detail one story of the extermination of a camp simply because some blacks had been seen passing a mining station where nothing had been stolen for months. Roundly he charges the "grass dukes" and their subordinates with "murdering, abducting children for immoral purposes, and stockwhipping defenceless girls, and he condemns" each Government that comes into power for winking at the slaughter of our blackfellow subjects of the Queen as an easy way of getting rid of the native question. The *Northern Miner* asserts that this picture is not overdrawn and that the atrocities mentioned have even been exceeded. It refers to squatters branding blacks, keeping harems of black gins, and finding their slaughtering record no bar to advancement to high office in the State. The black trooper system is, in the view of this paper, legalised murder, which reckons the life of a bullock of more account than that of a score of blackfellows. We do not vouch for the truth of these serious charges; but if true, the horrible demoralisation of such a system on blacks and whites alike is difficult

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<sup>87</sup> QSA ITM847289 DR69596, 88/7966. Note new stations at Atherton, Limestone and Paterson in the Cook District in 1888.

<sup>88</sup> QSA ITM289938.

<sup>89</sup> This suggests the alleged correspondent was W E Armit, who was cashiered from the Native Police. See p 176 below.

to overestimate; and cry exaggeration as we may, it is clear that enough remains to call for the immediate and earnest attention of the Government. Sir Thomas McIlwraith will earn the gratitude of the colony to all-time if he will but exert himself for the aborigines of Australia - whose country after all we have taken from them by force - as Sir Samuel Griffith exerted himself for the kanakas.<sup>90</sup>

Fred T Wimble<sup>91</sup> of Brisbane responded to the above editorial on 15 September 1888:

On behalf of the Cairns settlers, I protest against this district being included in the indictment. As regards the decimation of the myalls beyond Herberton and towards Georgetown, I am not in a position to offer any opinion, but as far as the Cairns district is concerned, although the blacks have caused the selectors much trouble and loss by their depredations, I can vouch that no such atrocities as your correspondent describes have ever been committed there. I concur with your correspondent in his remarks concerning the "native police force," and would urge its being abolished because it serves no useful purpose either for protecting the selectors or civilising the aborigines. The necessity for protecting the selectors from the depredations of the myalls must nevertheless not be lost (sight) of if we are to have a prosperous farming community established on our Northern coastlands, and it, therefore, becomes the duty of the Government to consider the best means to attain this end, and at the same time prevent the decimation of the blacks. To successfully carry this into effect, it will be necessary for the Government to inaugurate a scheme which will give security to both the settler and myall, and this I venture to say can be secured by proclaiming areas of land as reserves for the natives and placing them under the supervision of responsible Government agents.<sup>92</sup>

The *Brisbane Courier* in a follow-up editorial made the following observations:

We are not at all certain that the severe attacks made upon the native police were justified. Black trackers have in the past been good servants and they are indispensable in the sparsely populated districts of the West and North in running criminals to earth. No doubt abuses have occurred in connection with this branch of the force, but that is no reason why an efficient and necessary department of the public service should be abolished. If there are, as Mr Wimble and others insisted, instances of what are called legalised murder by the native police, then these should be discovered, strongly repressed, and sharply punished. But there is a wide difference between reform in the discipline of a desirable protective force and its complete disbandment.<sup>93</sup>

During the supply debate in the Legislative Assembly of 15 October 1888, Sir S W Griffith said there had been some serious complaints made as to the treatment of blacks by the police in the Northern districts. He never believed all those stories, but it was as well that they should be contradicted. Did the hon gentleman know how many stations there were of native police?

The Colonial Secretary said the Commissioner of Police informed him that he had heard of no outrages. He had a list showing that though provision was made for 200, only 95 were employed. As a rule, the number of trackers in charge of one white man was very small, but in several places in the extreme North, the numbers in charge of one white man ranged from four to nine.<sup>94</sup>

Under the byline of the Georgetown mining correspondent, November 12, the following news worthy comments were added to the native police debate:

The police camp at Dunrobin is a sore grievance with nearly all the people on the field. They cannot understand why some half a dozen blackboys, their gins, besides a campkeeper and a

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<sup>90</sup> Brisbane Courier 15 September 1888 p 7, abridged.

<sup>91</sup> Founded the *Cairns Post* in 1883 and was elected an alderman. He was elected to the Queensland Legislative Assembly as a Liberal member for Cairns on 5 May 1888. <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/wimble-frederick-thomas-13250/text4433>, published first in hardcopy 2005, accessed online 25 December 2023.

<sup>92</sup> Brisbane Courier 17 September 1888 p 3, abridged.

<sup>93</sup> Brisbane Courier 16 October 1888 p 4.

<sup>94</sup> Hansard LA 15 October 1888 p 659.

complete establishment, should be kept up merely to look after a few horses for the (gold) escort. Were they occasionally kept on patrol, they would be doing some good, as they would exercise a check on the blacks, who rob miners' camps, kill cattle, and do a considerable amount of damage every year. Those people who do not trouble the police by reporting depredations take the law into their own hands. In this way, law-abiding people and the blacks suffer which might be prevented by an energetic officer and a few troopers patrolling the outside places. At present the native police branch study their own comforts. The blacks who camp outside the town here must have a hard struggle for existence.<sup>95</sup>

During December 1888, the tin-miners at the Bloomfield Falls, and in the Bloomfield scrub, had their tents raided and all their provisions, clothes, arms, ammunition, and watches, &c., carried away by aboriginal bushrangers. The chief robber band consisted of three myalls and two deserters from the native police force. The latter class, civilised enough to understand the use of arms and the customs of the whites, was very dangerous. At the banquet, at Herberton, for Mr F T Wimble, MLA, one of the speakers remarked that it was about time something was done about the blacks, as at present selectors had to go fencing with their effects on their back! That this was no exaggerated picture was evinced by Constable Hansen (at Atherton, with one black trooper to aid the settlers in solving the aboriginal problem) finding several native camps and capturing a large number of axes, tomahawks, clothing, knives, revolvers and cartridges, and other articles too numerous to mention, all of which had been stolen from the already overburdened selectors.<sup>96</sup>

The Commissioner of Police advised in his annual report of 1888:

Native police stations at Cluny, Eyre's Creek, and Corella Creek near Cloncurry have been broken up. I hope this year to be able to make some reduction in the number of native trackers. I have already issued instructions with the object in view.

#### **CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION — SECOND PROGRESS REPORT.**

The second progress report of the commissioners appointed "to inquire into and report upon the general working of the several departments and branches of the civil service and upon the best means to be adopted for increasing the efficiency thereof, and into the mode of keeping the public accounts of our said colony, and upon any improvements that may be made therein," was issued as follows:

Native Police. Considerable evidence has been given to show that native police camps, as at present constituted, should be abolished, except in one or two unsettled districts where their presence is an absolute necessity. Wherever the services of trackers are required, they should be placed in charge of white police; in other words, mixed camps are all that is necessary. The existing arrangements form a fruitful source of extravagant expenditure. According to Mr Seymour's evidence, fifteen camps are in existence, requiring the services of eleven sub-inspectors —three at £250 and eight at £180 per annum salary, and £25 travelling allowance to each; and four senior constables at £132 each. The total number of trackers under these fifteen officers is 195. We look upon the employment of a large number of officers of such high rank and pay to control and direct the operations of so small a number of men as wasteful in the extreme. The evidence clearly proves that sergeants or senior-constables would be quite competent to manage these camps. We find that the rations for trackers absorb no less than £7250 a year (vide estimates), irrespective of their wages, 13s 6d per month each. We recommend that the services of the eleven native police sub-inspectors be dispensed with, that

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<sup>95</sup> Queensland Figaro and Punch 26 May p 3, 7 July 1888 p 19. Brisbane Courier 29 November 1888 p 6.

<sup>96</sup> Morning Bulletin 1 January 1889 p 6.

all the camps except in one or two of the unsettled districts be abolished, and that the trackers be attached to white police stations when required.<sup>97</sup>

In February 1889, the residents of the Herberton district petitioned the Colonial Treasurer to increase the number of native police in the Herberton district. They advised the blacks were killing cattle on the Barron twenty miles north of Herberton and killing cattle on Wooroora station thirty miles to the south. The present police camp was forty miles north of Herberton and too far from the stations at the southern end of the district. They requested a native police camp be established at Nigger Creek. The Commissioner's response was, "There is a more experienced officer now in charge of the NP camp on the Barron River and I am in hope that he will be able to do all that is required. Nigger Creek is too close to Herberton for a NP station."<sup>98</sup>

A H Zillman, Police Magistrate, Herberton on 1 March 1889 wrote to the Colonial Secretary.

I proceeded to Atherton to view the blacks myself. Unfortunately, the blacks had returned to the scrubs and the constable was absent on duty. Mr Kelly had supplied some flour and beef and two acres of sweet potatoes. I authorised him to supply flour and beef if the blacks came in again. That the blacks have retarded settlement in the Barron valley is an undoubted fact. I think it would be a good policy to make an attempt to quieten them and to this end, they should be supplied with rations and blankets. Many people believe kind treatment of the blacks will succeed.<sup>99</sup>

Zillman wrote again to the Colonial Secretary on 15 March 1889.

I refer to your authorisation to spend £20 per month on rations. I recommend it be increased to £50 per month. There are in all, it is estimated, about two hundred blacks in the Barron Scrub willing to come to Atherton. I think if they were fed for a month or two and a good understanding with them established, they would, like the Russell and Johnstone River blacks, become of use to the selectors. Since Constable Hansen has been stationed at Atherton, the blacks have been less troublesome.<sup>100</sup>

Inspector Stuart, Port Douglas, 19 March 1889 to the Colonial Secretary.

I forward a report from Sub-Inspector Brooke. He does not corroborate Mr Kelly's assertion that the blacks are in a starving condition. I agree with Brooke that it is a mistake in supplying rations to blacks without making them work for them. I recommend the sum should not exceed £50, rations to be issued by police. To civilise the wild aboriginal, the primary step is to overcome his fear of the white man which can only be done through his stomach - but once that is accomplished, the reminder of his education is mainly a matter of time.<sup>101</sup>

On 16 April 1889, the Commissioner forwarded to the Colonial Secretary the report of Sub-Inspector Brooke, Barron River camp:

I proceeded to Union Camp where many depredations have been committed. The blacks are under the protection of Wason, a local butcher and storekeeper who receives £3 a month from the government. He only feeds his blacks. On enquiring of depredations by blacks, he spoke in a most disrespectful way of the government and the police. I told him the grant was to encourage good behaviour and if the blacks stole, it would stop. He replied, Sub-Inspector Carr had said the same

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<sup>97</sup> The Civil Service Commission was appointed in December 1887 to report on the civil service of the colony. Brisbane Courier 30 April 1889 p 6 Civil Service Commission. Queenslander 4 May 1889 p 842.

<sup>98</sup> QSA ITM847303 DR69649, 89/1779.

<sup>99</sup> QSA Item ID 6820, 89/7756, 89/2147, frame numbers 64-65.

<sup>100</sup> QSA Item ID 6820, 89/7756, 89/2573, frame numbers 71-72.

<sup>101</sup> QSA Item ID 6820, 89/7756, 89/3035, frame numbers 81-82.

but the government took no notice of him and would take no notice of my advice. The blacks are encouraged to loaf about all day naked; no wonder it leads to stealing. This place was a good example of what may be expected at Atherton if the blacks receive government rations without being made to do some work. Mr Kelly is the local storekeeper at Thornborough and seeing Wason receiving £3 expects the same.<sup>102</sup>

On 8 May 1889, Inspector Stuart of Port Douglas forwarded to the Commissioner the report of Sub-Inspector Brooke, Barron River camp on Mr Robinson's station, Wooroora, Herberton:

I visited Wooroora Station. Blacks had been killing cattle. Robinson Jnr. had followed the blacks into the scrubs and detained one till my arrival. He only employs two black boys to assist in stock-keeping. He was willing to be friendly but it was both difficult and dangerous to do so. I sent the troopers into the scrub to induce the blacks to come into the station; they brought one man back. I told the blacks if they did not kill any cattle they would not be molested by the Native Police; Mr Robinson agreed to kill one bullock per month for them if they would come in and camp near the station and not hunt the cattle. I warned Robinson of the dangers as the blacks cannot be trusted. I also inspected the blacks at Atherton. 200 could be got together if some system was adopted to feed them.<sup>103</sup>

On 28 June 1889, A H Zillman wrote to Under Colonial Secretary recommending that £8 per month be granted to Robinson of Wooroora Station to feed the blacks.<sup>104</sup> The Under Colonial Secretary advised Zillman that the Wooroora blacks were granted relief at £8 per month, on 8 July 1889.<sup>105</sup>

Zillman, 26 August 1889 to the Colonial Secretary.

The blacks are on the whole peaceably disposed and since they have been supplied with rations have not molested the selectors. I think it would be injudicious to stop the supply of rations as they would probably resume their depredations. Selectors have been induced by the present state of affairs to plant crops where under former conditions they would not. I understand also that the Native Police Force has been reduced in the district and if the rations are stopped and the blacks again become troublesome, there would not be adequate protection against them.<sup>106</sup>

On 27 September 1889, Zillman, again wrote to the Under Colonial Secretary and stated that he believed the amount paid to Mr Robinson was not adequate. He recommended an increase to £12 per month. Zillman then continued his letter with a long-winded dissertation on how to control and civilise the blacks. B D Morehead, Colonial Secretary said, "Let Mr G P M Murray proceed north and report upon the judicious or otherwise of this system of dealing with the blacks in this locality."<sup>107</sup>

#### **CONDITION OF THE HERBERTON BLACKS — MR MURRAY'S OFFICIAL REPORT.**

The Colonial Secretary sent Mr G P M Murray, relieving police-magistrate, to inquire into the condition of the blacks and report on the advisability or otherwise of adopting the measures suggested, or to suggest such a mode of dealing with the blacks as to him (Mr Murray) might seem

<sup>102</sup> QSA Item ID 6820, 89/3544, frame numbers 40-42.

<sup>103</sup> QSA Item ID 6820, 89/2011, frame nos 35-36, 89/6114, frame nos 55-56 & 89/7629, frame no 293.

<sup>104</sup> QSA Item ID 6820, 95/6927, 89/5905, frame number 289.

<sup>105</sup> QSA Item ID 6820, 95/6927, frame numbers 313-314.

<sup>106</sup> QSA Item ID 6820 89/7756, 89/7756, frame numbers 100-101.

<sup>107</sup> QSA Item ID 6820, 95/6927, 89/8738, frame numbers 308-310 & 89/8172, frame numbers 311-312.

expedient. Mr Murray arrived at Herberton on 19 October 1889.<sup>108</sup> On 13 November, he handed in his report to the Colonial Secretary.

On 21 October he proceeded to Wooroora station, about thirty miles from Herberton in a southerly direction, where he found about three blacks at the homestead, but at a camp about eight miles up the creek, there were about sixty-five men, women, and children. Mr Robinson informed him that since May he had killed thirty-three head of cattle for their use, but had given them no flour; £8 per month had been allowed by the Government to meet the expense. Up to May this year, the blacks had been kept out from the station, but Mr Robinson finding that they speared and killed many of his horses and cattle, determined to let them in and try what effect letting them in would have. This treatment so far has been successful, as he has not missed any of his stock. Mr Murray reports that the blacks are very numerous, and live chiefly in the scrubs on the heads of the Johnstone, Tully, and Murray rivers. All of the Herbert River scrubs are very dense. Nuts and opossums are very plentiful, on which they live. These scrubs are great strongholds to which they retreat after depredations. Everyone he met agreed in stating that the depredations had almost entirely ceased since the blacks had been let in and fed. At Atherton, about sixteen miles out of Herberton, Mr Murray found about fifty blacks in camp, but the average number of blacks there was about seventy. Here £20 per month had been paid by the Government to feed them, and it had been found that the depredations of the blacks had almost ceased since they had been allowed in and fed.

Before, they used to come out of the scrub and clear off the crops of maize and potatoes belonging to the selectors. On the 26th he visited Northcote, thirty miles distant, where he found seventeen blacks, though it was stated they sometimes number forty. The place was deserted by all but one white man. The blacks had never been very troublesome here. At Thornborough, he found no blacks, but fourteen days previously there had been as many as eighty there and Mr Williams, the clerk of petty sessions, had given them three 50 lb. bags of flour. £3 per month was the original allowance there, but since Kingsborough has been deserted the amount allowed for that place has been added to that for Thornborough, making the amount now available £4 10s. per month, but this has not been fully used, as the blacks had not visited the township much during the past twelve months, owing probably to the absence of large scrubs and the country being open and hilly. On the 28th he visited Union camp, about sixteen miles from Thornborough, which forms a rendezvous for the blacks of Thornborough, Herberton, Northcote, and Port Douglas. He found only 11 blacks here, but a short time before there were from 70 to 100 there; £3 per month is allowed for their relief here. He did not visit Chillagoe but saw Mr Atherton, the owner of the station, who did not want the blacks fed but asked for some blankets and shirts for them.<sup>109</sup> Mr Atherton had not experienced any trouble with the blacks since they had been allowed into the station. No blacks were found at Cairns or the Mulgrave River. Mr Murray intended visiting the Mount Orient mine, but on meeting the manager, Mr Longden, he informed him that he would in all probability find no blacks there. From 70 to 90 were the largest numbers he had seen in at one time. The village has about 50 men, women, and children. The Russell River, Johnstone River, Herberton, and Atherton blacks occasionally visit Mount Orient, which is about thirty-six miles from Herberton. The country is very mountainous and broken, and it is almost impossible to take horses there. No blacks were found above Mitchell Vale. Mr Zillman, police-magistrate of Herberton, Sub-Inspector Brooke, Inspector Stuart, Sergeant Kindregan, Mr Wason, and many others, who had had experience in the district, unanimously agreed that the depredations of the blacks had been much lessened, and in some parts had entirely ceased, since the plan of supplying them with food had been put into practice. He considered the idea of a large reserve for Atherton a very good one but thought it would have to be a very large one if it was to be of any use as a hunting ground.

As for the blacks settling there on a small reserve, as suggested by Mr Wimble and Mr Zillman, and teaching them to cultivate the soil, &c., it would only be time and money thrown away. History had clearly shown that hunters they had been for the last century (and they might have been the same for the past thousand years for aught we know), and hunters they will remain. He would certainly not try to prevent any philanthropic individual from trying the experiment of making them cultivators of the soil, but would certainly not recommend the Government to share the expense.

<sup>108</sup> QSA Item ID 6820, 95/6927, 89/8738, frame numbers 308-310 & 89/8172, frame numbers 311-312.

<sup>109</sup> QSA ITM847325 DR69718 89/9334.

The only permanent way to benefit the Australian blacks would be to remove them entirely away, and far away from their homes, where they could be taught to support themselves. In their own country, they will not remain long enough in one place to be taught anything but the bad qualities of the whites, and it is only a question of a very few years as to how long they will exist. The sooner they are brought into contact with the whites under present circumstances the sooner will they disappear. Disease, clothing, rum, &c., will soon work their destruction. From observations and inquiries made, he is of opinion that the amounts granted annually by the Government have been only used in feeding the blacks, and in the cases of Mr Robinson and Mr Wason rations in excess of the grant have been issued. Under existing circumstances he certainly recommends the continuance of the allowance for feeding them and agrees with Mr Zillman that now the system has been started it would be unwise to discontinue it, and that it should be placed in the hands of the different divisional boards subject to the inspection and report, say annually, by some experienced officer sent round by the Government, and it should be clearly understood that the rations (beef and flour only) are intended for the aged men and women and the children belonging to the locality where issued, not to any wandering tribe coming from a distance. From what he could gather there are still large mobs of the blacks in the scrubs on the heads of the rivers already mentioned, who have not been into the white settlements, and, if rations were issued indiscriminately, mobs of 400 or 500 would turn up at any time, whereas, if not encouraged to leave their native scrubs, they could always get plenty to eat.

The report about starving blacks was not correct. He had seldom seen blacks in better condition, especially the women, two of whom were fit for exhibition. He thinks the allowance at Atherton might be reduced to £12 per month. There are many settlers in the vicinity from whom the blacks can obtain work. The sum mentioned would be sufficient to keep the aged and children in camp if properly issued to them. The allowance at Wooroora is rather small and might be raised to £12 per month. For Thornborough and Union Camp £5 per month would be sufficient, as the blacks don't always remain at either place. At Mount Orient mine there are several mining camps where the blacks can earn their food to a certain extent when these come about so that £8 per month should meet their requirements. The above amounts are suggested under the present system and are only intended to feed the aged and the children belonging to the tribe of the locality. If the Government decided to go to greater expense, reserves could be proclaimed in different parts of the district, and depots formed where supplies could be kept for distribution, but the result would be the same, only temporary relief doing no permanent good. He recommends that a strong detachment of native mounted troopers should be stationed in the neighbourhood of Herberton for the next twelve or eighteen months, as now the blacks have been allowed in after having been kept out for years, a real danger will commence. White men will interfere with the gins. This will result in a row, and probably murder. The mere fact of seeing and knowing that there was a chance of speedy punishment would act as a preventive to crime. Since the system of supplying rations to the different camps has been instituted, evidence goes to show that crime by the blacks has been lessened, and he thinks the few hundreds or even thousands of pounds spent in this way may continue to do good. No doubt numerous demands for supply will come in from different places, but if properly regulated, and only a tribe belonging to the locality be attended to, the expenses need not be so very great. Mr Murray concludes by stating that he looks upon a small reserve as useless, and recommends that, if one is to be proclaimed at all, it should be an extensive one, large enough to make small settlements inside of it if required. The Colonial Secretary approves of the suggestions for a large reserve, and the establishment of a strong detachment of native mounted troopers.<sup>110</sup>

Cairns, December 21. The Government considered Mr Police Magistrate Murray's report of the Aboriginals and arranged for two efficient corps of native police at Nigger Creek, near Herberton. This measure amply protected the Mulgrave and Russell Rivers, the tin and silver country in the opposite direction, and the many stations thereabouts.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Brisbane Courier 21 November 1889 p 6. QSA Item ID 6820, 95/6927, 89/9948, frame numbers 322-332. QSA Item ID 6820, 95/6927, 89/8738, frame numbers 308-310 & 89/8172, frame numbers 311-312.

<sup>111</sup> Week 4 January 1890 p 20. QSA ITM847252 DR84057, 87/9884.

Although the Cairns area and surrounding districts had been a hotbed of Aboriginal disturbances during 1889, the Cook districts were equally troublesome.

Cooktown, 14 June 1889

Sir Thomas McIlwraith, MLA, Brisbane.

Some time ago, the police department said they had arranged to place a detachment of native police on the Archer River. This was after my brother had been speared and Mr Charles Massey of the adjoining station killed by the blacks. Now Mr Watson has been murdered and another man (Evans) nearly so on the station joining us on the north. Inspector Murray says they intend placing a detachment there now. The troopers are waiting, only he has nobody to place in charge of them. Could you say a word for us in Brisbane and have someone appointed quickly? Alan H Nott.<sup>112</sup>

The Commissioner of Police forwarded the police report of 1889 to the Colonial Secretary and advised:

The total strength of the Force on 31 December last was 898; this is an increase of 29 in the ordinary police on the preceding year and a decrease of 60 in the Native police; its distribution is shown in Table A. The Native Police camps at the Barron River, Palmer River, McIvor River, Carl Creek, Norman River, and Dunrobin have been broken up, and by reducing the number of trackers, at other stations, I was enabled to dispense with 60 of the Native Police. I regret to report the deaths of Sub-Inspectors R Little and Warby. The former had charge of the Native Police Detachment at Eyre's Creek; the latter at Dunrobin, near Georgetown. Sub-Inspectors Brooke and Margetts resigned during the year. The Nigger Creek station was also established.

#### MR MURRAY'S REPORT AND THE WOOROORA BLACKS.

In connection with the above, the following letter was sent to the *Brisbane Courier* by Mr F W Robinson of Wooroora for publication:

I am surprised that an experienced officer like Mr Murray should make such a suggestion as to feed the old men, gins, and pickaninnies and leave out the young men who commit all the depredations. The report also states that there are plenty of nuts and opossums in the scrub. I know there are during a certain part of the year, but fruit trees do not bear all year round. I have resided here nearly seven years, and have travelled the scrub and know that for six months of the year, the nuts are very scarce. All the hunting grounds which the blacks formerly had have now been taken up by the whites of which I am one and if the blacks continually kill our cattle how is the rent to be paid? I do not mind a fair thing; but when it comes to thirty head speared in five months and the rent doubled, it is about time to speak up. The report also states that the blacks are far from being in a starving condition. I should not wonder. The blacks have had thirty-three head of cattle killed for them, for which I have received £24 from the Government in four months. I do not mind losing a little to prevent them from killing my cattle but when I have to protect others; I am not able to do it at that price. The blacks have done no damage here since they have been fed. Things are very different here to what they are at Atherton, where there are plenty of settlers to employ the young men. How is it possible to feed the old men and gins and leave the young men out? The nearest places are Woodleigh and Evelyn, twenty-three miles; the boys are not able to go there and back the same day and work. At present, there are eighty blacks in here; I have been getting £8 a month but it has been increased to £12 this month. Is that a fair amount to feed that number of blacks? The increase made in the grant for food for the blacks in the Herberton district since Mr Murray's visit is £14. The blacks have dug and planted 2 acres of corn and potatoes, which will be of no use in the way of food for them for some time. I consider £20 a month at the least ought to be expended on the blacks here to give them all a little. If anybody would be kind enough to take them away, I would not mind giving a bullock a month towards feeding them as long as I was left alone. I also see by the report that Mr Murray recommends a strong detachment of native mounted troopers at Nigger

<sup>112</sup> QSA ITM289938. See pages 139 and 189 below.

Creek. A few mounted troopers would do very well as we have an experienced officer here at present, one who is not afraid of wearing his boots out in the scrub if we want assistance. Not like the last sub-inspector at the Barron camp, who would not go out in the scrub when here because I would not go with him, but sent his boys. I hope something more will be done by the Government, and I have to thank Mr F T Wimble MLA, for assisting me in getting the first grant.<sup>113</sup>

## SCHEMES FOR BLACKS.

The *Cairns Post* of 4 January 1890 editorialised as follows:

The settlers in the Russell and Mulgrave River districts seem to be fairly unanimously of the opinion that Mr Murray's recently discovered schemes with reference to the blacks are somewhat Utopian, and that, if carried out, far more protection is likely to be afforded to the blacks than to themselves. It is stated that the camp on the Mulgrave River is to be abandoned, and no thought appears to have been given, either to the ample protection afforded in the past by this camp to the people of the district, or the services rendered by Sergeant Whelan. It is said to be the intention of the department to make the headquarters of the black troopers at Nigger Creek, near Herberton, and that a comprehensive system of patrolling is to afford a sweet sense of security to the enormous district intervening between Nigger Creek, Cairns and Geraldton. The question of roads, and speedy communication in the event of robbery, murder or outrage, seem to have been entirely overlooked; and it is the opinion of selectors, long enough in the district to be capable of judging, that the blacks will laugh at the system, and the settlers suffer. It seems patent enough that a permanent camp easily communicated with, with a smart officer in charge, is more to be depended upon by the selectors, and likely to prove a greater terror to the blacks, than a shifting camp, the coming and going of which will be no secret whatever to the aborigines. It is proposed, we believe, to place the headquarters at Nigger Creek in charge of Mr Lamond, Sub-Inspector of the Northern Division, now stationed at the Laura; but after a patient service of some twelve or fourteen years, a police magistracy or an inspectorship would perhaps have been a more fitting reward for this gentleman. In conjunction with Mr Lamond, Mr Acting Sub-Inspector Cooper has been named, and this gentleman, who bears the reputation of being an active and zealous officer, formerly a C.P.S. in New South Wales, and recently acting sub-inspector at Cooktown, is at present in the incomprehensible position of being in charge of a couple of black boys at the Mulgrave camp, with orders not to go out until he receives reinforcements, which appear never to arrive. The present system is bad enough, and the selectors may be pardoned for imagining that the suggested new system will be worse. In the meantime, robbery follows on robbery, with an occasional act of incendiarism thrown in. Mr Waugh was recently cleared out of the trifle of two tons of potatoes and a quantity of tobacco; Mr Bolton had his humble home demolished by fire; and now Mr James Allen has his store at Goldsborough broken into on Xmas Day, the blacks clearing away with loot to the tune of £30. It is imagined that all these little affairs were perpetrated by "ration" blacks; at all events, positive proof is forthcoming that the last-named robbery was committed by them.

By "ration" blacks, we mean the boys fed on the Government money, and in this scheme alone—viz., the distribution of food to the aborigines—the selectors profess to see a danger to themselves, inasmuch as the grant is sufficient to tempt in a much larger number of mouths than it can fill, with the result that those not fed seek relief by robbing the selectors. It is also urged that the "ration" boys are made up in a great measure of the half-civilised blacks, who occasionally haunt the town, and who are beyond doubt a far more dangerous and treacherous class than their wilder brethren. Taking all the circumstances into consideration, and bearing in mind the fact that half a dozen white men have within the last few months been immolated on the Russell by half-civilised sable cutthroats, and no more fuss or enquiry made about the murders by the department than if they, the murdered men, had been bandicoots, it is indeed excusable if the people of the outlying districts are somewhat exercised in their minds about the results of Mr Murray's experiments, and prefer "to bear the ills they have, than rush to others they know not of." The hardships and privations bravely borne by the pioneers of the Mulgrave and Russell are best known to themselves, and it is the bounden duty of

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<sup>113</sup> Brisbane Courier 3 January 1890 p 6 & Morning Bulletin 6 January 1890 p 6.

the Government to protect them in the most effectual manner from robbery, arson and murder: and one step towards this end is, it seems to us, to leave the Mulgrave camp where it is, not however the empty mockery it is at present, but with an efficient number of troopers.<sup>114</sup>

Cairns, January 20, 1890. Police arrangements at present were giving satisfaction neither to the selectors in the district nor the people in the town. Residents in the Mulgrave and Russell districts view with alarm the removal of the Mulgrave camp to Nigger Creek, and in the meantime, the force stationed at the present camp was insufficient to protect settlers from the frequent depredations of the blacks. It was surmised that the good done by distributing food to the aborigines would not be unmixed with evil, that the system must inevitably bring evils in its train; this was, at least, the opinion of many of those best qualified to give an opinion. The town community had for a long time been aware of the incongruity of the headquarters of the inspector being at Port Douglas, while Cairns was left to a sergeant and a ridiculously small posse of constables. The intolerable absurdity of the North being governed by southern officials, whose acquaintance with it was derived from maps hung in snug Brisbane offices, was never more forcibly demonstrated. True, it had at length dawned upon the authorities that Cairns was of sufficient importance for Supreme Court sittings, and the logical deduction was that with this being the case the claim of Cairns to police headquarters was self-evident. Beyond patrolling Abbott Street and running in an occasional drunk of police protection in Cairns, there was none. Yet the police cannot be blamed for the state of affairs; the paucity of their number renders any further evidence of them impossible. This rudimentary state of affairs should not be allowed to exist in a town of the importance of Cairns.<sup>115</sup>

Russell River Notes. Much admiration was expressed at the manner in which the native police displayed their warlike capabilities in dispersing one harmless camp of blacks who were working on the selections about Babinda Creek, and refusing to visit two camps that were known to contain some dangerous neighbours from the Mulgrave, who were reported by the blacks to be the boys who broke into James Allen's store at the Top Camp. It was reported to the native police that Mr R. Waugh was entirely cleared out of his stock of potatoes during his absence from home attending the last Divisional Board meeting. The native police went to Waugh's place and stayed one night, but returned to camp without going near the depredators; thus, leaving the aggrieved party to take the matter into his own hands.<sup>116</sup>

To the Editor of the *Cairns Post*.

I would call your attention to the statements of your correspondent referring to the troopers, as they are calculated to make a wrong impression. The police under Sub-Inspector Cooper have, I consider, and the opinion is shared I think by all but your correspondent, done their duty most efficiently. They have got two out of the three murderers of Conway, and have also tracked the boys, who took Gellet's potatoes, over five or six miles of the roughest country imaginable, recovering the potatoes, also 20 revolver cartridges. Re the Babinda camp, the police were looking after a noted scoundrel and I expected to find him in the camp, but after being out nearly all night found that he had had warning and was non est. I think that it was quite excusable on the part of the troopers to fire two or three shots (in the air) just to let the boys know that they were really looking them up. After a night's tramp through dense scrub and getting such a disappointment, we would have done the same. I think that Mr Waugh, from all accounts, was himself to blame about his potatoes not being recovered, and as to the damage done by the squall, your correspondent made such a devil of a fuss about, £1 would cover everything.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Cairns Post 4 January 1890 p 2.

<sup>115</sup> Cairns Post 29 January 1890 p 2. Telegraph 11 January 1890 p 10. Cairns' population 2511, 1891 Census.

<sup>116</sup> Cairns Post 19 February 1890 p 2.

<sup>117</sup> Cairns Post 15 March 1890 p 3.

News was received in Herberton on 18 February of an outrage perpetrated by the blacks at Wooroora. F Robinson left his two black boys at his camp, where the blacks had been fed lately. Four or five myalls only were there when he left. When Robinson returned, he found the camp burned to the ground, and his black boy, "Ned," murdered, the body partly roasted and eaten, and the other boy missing. Constable Hansen and the troopers started for the scene of the outrage.<sup>118</sup>

Many of the selectors ridiculed Mr Murray's scheme for the blacks and spoke in high terms of admiration of the services rendered by Constable Hansen. The settlers want protection and consider they had enjoyed far greater security under Hansen than ever they would get under the Utopian scheme of Mr Murray. The large reserve suggested into which the blacks were to be placed was considered absurd, inasmuch as tribal differences were so great that place half a dozen different tribes in one large reserve, and the old history of the Kilkenny cats would be repeated. The portion of Mr Murray's scheme with regard to feeding the aborigines cannot be written down as an unqualified success, and the system had on more than one occasion led directly or indirectly to trouble. Only the old men and women were fed, and no tobacco was provided, but with the old men and women come young stalwart blacks with capacious appetites, and it will be remembered two tame blacks on a station outside Herberton were killed and eaten by the ravenous visitors. Even with a white man an empty stomach had no conscience, and can more be expected of King Billy of Bellenden Ker if his inside was as lean as an empty kerosene tin? In Hansen's scheme, it was not the weak that were watched, but the strong and dangerous, and when boys were brought in the strong bucks were supplied with tucker, but they had to work for it and this they were willing to do, Mr Wimble promised to represent what he had heard to the proper quarter in Brisbane.<sup>119</sup>

On 24 March 1890, Inspector Lamond received the following petition from settlers seeking a new native police station on the Wooroora run:

Owing to the frequent depredations of the blacks, it is essential to the safety of life and property that additional police protection be granted to the settlers near the scrub between Evelyn and Cashmere. The lessee of Wooroora station who has been feeding the blacks at the outstation for the last eight months has recently had two black boys killed and his house at the outstation burnt to the ground and what tools and rations were not burnt with the hut were carried off to the scrub together with the body of one of the boys. The perpetrators of this outrage were tracked through the scrub where they had roasted and eaten the boy and they then made down onto the headwaters of the Tully, Russell and Johnstone Rivers where they are known to be very numerous and where, owing to the rough nature of the country, it is impossible to follow them except on foot and the camp at Nigger Creek is too distant to allow of this being done with the necessary promptness. They suggest that a temporary native police camp be formed on Wooroora as the place is most central for the purpose.<sup>120</sup>

Lamond forwarded the petition to the Commissioner of Police together with the following comments:

I consider such expenditure may be avoided by placing a double detachment at Nigger Creek. This I consider would not only afford ample protection to Mr Robinson but would also give police protection to the outlying stations as then a continuous patrol could be kept up throughout the whole of that large sub-district. Mr Robinson, it appears, does not employ white labour but works his run with black boys. With reference to the murder of his two black boys, Ned and Ningi by wild aborigines, I consider Mr Robinson has himself to blame for leaving them by themselves in charge

<sup>118</sup> Morning Bulletin 25 February 1890 p 6.

<sup>119</sup> Cairns Post 15 March 1890 p 2. Cairns Post 6 March 1889 p 2 & 25 September 1889 p 2.

<sup>120</sup> Signed by F W Robinson Wooroora, F Brathwaite Cashmere, W MacLeod Riverland, C A Garbutt Hot Springs, L H grant Woodleigh, W P Grant Woodleigh, F S Grant Woodleigh, R Perrott Mullaburra, G F Nilson Herberton, E Campbell Strathvale, H C Wilson Gunnawarra, H R Day Gunnawarra, G Robinson Wooroora, E Robinson Evelyn, H Halloran Evelyn.

of his station and property without a white man near them. Mr Robinson knew that the aborigines were both numerous and dangerous and yet in the face of this he leaves his station and makes no provision for the safety of his unfortunate black boys but leaves them to the mercy of these wild cannibal aborigines. Mr Robinson like all station owners that work their stock on the cheap with a couple of black boys would naturally enough like to have a native police station on his run, for then he would do without employing white labour. I don't consider one is required, as ample police protection can be afforded to Mr Robinson by working a double detachment from Nigger Creek.

On 15 June 1890, F W Robinson of Wooroora run wrote to the Colonial Secretary:

Received your reply to petition re: forming a native police camp on Wooroora. As I have been one of the greatest sufferers by the blacks since 1883, I think the government ought to give us more protection than we have at present. I applied to Inspector Lamond on 12 May for a patrol and the police have not turned up yet. If it takes nearly five weeks to go 36 miles, that is no protection at all. The district that the officer at Nigger Creek has to travel over is very much too large and it would take one man doing nothing else but patrolling on this side of Herberton. There is no encouragement to settle on the land when a person comes home and sees all his things gone and his house burnt down; what encouragement is that? Hoping that some more protection will be given to this district.<sup>121</sup>

The Tinaroo Divisional Board advised the Colonial Secretary that over 200 hundred blacks came into Atherton from the neighbouring scrubs, which required the strengthening of the constable stationed at Atherton. On 9 July 1890, the Tinaroo Divisional Board again requested that two extra black troopers be stationed at Atherton, as the current police protection was insufficient against any sudden outrage by the blacks. The Commissioner advised there was a strong detachment at Nigger Creek about 12 miles from Atherton which was sufficient for this work.<sup>122</sup>

The *Cairns Post* published the following editorial on 12 April 1890; it also published similar editorials on 26 July 1890 and 17 September 1890:

When Inspector Stewart was promoted to Charleville, it was naturally hoped that the police headquarters for the district would be removed from Port Douglas to Cairns and although from the former deserted village arose a cry that it was still sweet Auburn, the loveliest of the plain, no one seriously believed for a moment that the change would not take place. A change has taken place, but a startling one. It is stated that Inspector Murray takes charge of the district and that Cooktown will be headquarters. No objection can be properly advanced against Cooktown having an Inspector, but it decidedly seems the height of absurdity that Cairns and the district, in the matter of police protection, should be bossed from that town of doubtful P.N.'s, gambling Chinamen and omnipresent goats. In the meantime, the town of Cairns is most inadequately protected. The police camp at the Mulgrave is dismantled and Mr Sub-Inspector Cadet Cooper and his dusky warriors, his aides de camp and his valet de chambre, have removed to the fresh scenes and pastures new of Nigger Creek. Inspector Lamond takes charge of Herberton; the only official forgotten apparently being Mr Hansen, who from all accounts has done good in affording bona fide protection to selectors and in practically solving the problem with reference to the blacks than any of his predecessors. It is only fair to infer that under present auspices Herberton and the Barron Valley will, in future, have nothing to complain of in the matter of police protection, but with reference to the Mulgrave and Russell River selectors, the question is open to doubt. Whether from the vantage ground of Nigger Creek the native police under the entirely new management can throw the aegis of protection over the selectors in the Cairns district remains to be seen. We dealt with a scheme propounded by Mr Murray PM in a previous article and we again assert that these ideas are Utopian and his plans based on the surroundings of other districts instead on those of our own.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> QSA ITM847351 DR69804 90/7024

<sup>122</sup> QSA ITM847359 DR69828, 90/9431

<sup>123</sup> Cairns Post 12 April 1890 p 2, abridged.

**Cook Division.**

Inspector's Office  
Cooktown  
3 April 1890

Commissioner of Police, Brisbane.

Referring to the attached two letters from the Divisional Board and the Chamber of Commerce, asking to have a native police station established on the lower Normanby, I report as follows that the spot indicated on the map forwarded to you under separate cover is about 60 miles from the present Laura camp and not far from Mr S I Balser's Breeza Plains station. Police stationed there would patrol Breeza Plains, Lakefield (McKenzie's), the Musgrave telegraph station and Kalkah run. The blacks are very numerous about Princess Charlotte Bay, but since robbing McKenzie's station they have not troubled anyone. I believe there is a good site for a camp at the place indicated. A 20-foot boat would be required, as it is impossible to move about there in the wet season without one. I intend visiting the Coen this month if possible and will again report upon this matter as I shall inspect the country on my way out. F Murray Inspector.

Chamber of Commerce, Cooktown, 8 March 1890.

The necessity of further police protection in the Laura District where at present it is dangerous for a man to travel his life being in perpetual danger owing to the savage and daring nature of the blacks, several of whom are in possession of firearms. Most suitable site for a camp would be on the Normanby River about 25 miles from Princess Charlotte Bay where the country is all good.

Daintree Divisional Board, Cooktown, 10 March 1890.

Necessity exists for a native police camp to be established on the lower Normanby-Coen Road. Three black boys are at present at large armed with rifles and about 1000 rounds of cartridges stolen from Messrs McKenzie's Bros station some months ago. E A Olive.

On 29 July 1890, a petition signed by many residents of Cooktown was presented to the Inspector of Police, which called for additional native police protection between the Laura River and the Coen at a spot on the lower Normanby already pointed out to Inspector Murray. The petitioners were induced to make this request from the hostile attitude lately advanced by the Aboriginals by which human life has been sacrificed and numerous stock driven away and destroyed. The petitioners pointed out that the Daintree Divisional Board had already addressed a request of the same tenor to the police department at Brisbane.<sup>124</sup>

*The Telegraph* of 8 August 1890:

The magisterial inquiry into the details of the recent murder of George Hobson confirmed beyond all doubt that the horrible deed was perpetrated by blacks who are still at large. The condition of northern settlers in this respect is not encouraging. Our Cooktown neighbours are petitioning for protection against the ravages of the blacks, and if the land is to be settled in these parts, the blacks' question will have to be well considered. In Brisbane, it is "the poor blacks;" up here it is "the poor whites," and so has it been for many years without the slightest improvement in the natural character of the youthful aboriginal. The bane of the north has been, and is, deserters and aborigines discharged from the native police, who having undergone a certain amount of discipline soon become efficient in the use of firearms, and who, when committing outrage, always make sure of procuring them. They exercise considerable influence amongst their several tribes, inciting the latter to commit robberies, outrages, and murder. Civilising Australian aborigines is an impossibility, they are ingrained with deception and native cunning; gratitude is unknown to them, and as a matter of fact, where murders have been committed the victims have always been those by whom the blacks were well treated. The last case formed no exception. The necessary protection will never be obtained

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<sup>124</sup> QSA ITM289938.

until patrols are formed of white men, each company being accompanied by one or two trackers. These patrols should be under the immediate control of inspectors or officers in charge of police stations who would be responsible for their actions. A continuous patrol of white men will prove to be the only efficient protection. Aboriginal reserves up this way would not be workable; the system has been tried without results, and without preventing continuous outrages.<sup>125</sup>

The Commissioner of Police forwarded the police report of 1890 to the Colonial Secretary and advised:

Stations at Mulgrave River, and Paterson (both native police) in the Cook district; and Durham and Dunrobin in the Burke district were closed.

*Cairns Post* of 21 March 1891:

Two years ago, it was useless for the selector to plant a single stalk of corn or a solitary seed. If he succeeded in raising a potato patch, he would have to spend all the day and the best part of the night watching it, and in the end, the blacks were sure to outwit him and pull every plant before the tubers were formed. The cunning depredators would come in the night and divest a standing field of corn of every cob and were capable of carrying off a ton in no time. When the selector grew cunning and artful in the protection of his property, the cunning and artfulness of his black foes also increased. Cases are known where a mob of blacks would come down in the daytime to a selector's place, and some of them would attract the owner's attention to the end of the clearing, while the rest would enter and clear out the humpy. One selector whilst fencing was in the habit of placing his belongings in a wheelbarrow—even the furniture of his humpy—and carting the lot to the place where he was working. Orders were given to disperse the camps, but that resulted in little or no good, and in some cases, actual harm. However, Constable Hansen and other constables in charge commenced to get the blacks in and make them a little less wild. This theory gained favour, and now in Atherton the selectors' corn is safe and he no longer has to watch his pumpkins, and his potatoes no longer do the disappearing trick. On very strong representations, the Government was induced to grant £20 a month to feed the aborigines, and the result is astonishing. The camps around Atherton hold some hundreds of blacks, and the district is still swarming with them, but depredations are at an end. The duty of collecting the blacks and superintending the distribution of the rations is entrusted to Constable Higgins, who is stationed with a trooper at Atherton. Mr W B Kelly, of Atherton, has the contract.<sup>126</sup>

In May 1891, the residents of Coen and surrounding districts petitioned the Colonial Secretary for the retention of the Coen police camp and opposed its transfer to the northern side of the Archer River:

1. The Coen district is the most central and convenient for a permanent police camp.
2. The country surrounding the Coen goldfield being a rough and mountainous nature, affords a safe refuge for tribes of blacks of the most savage kind known in northern Queensland and should not be deprived of local police protection. The result will be loss of property and probably valuable lives.
3. The Coen although known as a goldfield for the past 12 years, has been until recently unexplored. The news of the late discovery of rich auriferous lodes has induced a number of miners and others with their families to settle here and prospecting is being carried on vigorously and, in many cases, successfully at the present time.
4. The telegraph line from the time of its construction has supplied the blacks with material for weapons of the deadliest kind. Miles of wire in the immediate neighbourhood having been taken away and communication interrupted every wet season, notwithstanding, the presence of a detachment of trackers constantly on patrol.

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<sup>125</sup> Telegraph 8 August 1890 p 3.

<sup>126</sup> Cairns Post 21 March 1891 p 3.

5. Should the police camp be removed as intended, it will be on the north side of the Archer River which is the largest river in Cape York and impossible to cross by man or beast for at least three months every year, the country for miles south of it being a perfect morass in wet weather.
6. It would be impossible to receive assistance from Laura, if required, in time of floods owing to the number of large rivers to be encountered and low-lying country to be traversed.
7. During the past eight months there has been more stock killed and eaten by blacks within five miles of the Coen police camp than on the whole of the northern portion of the peninsula and but for the presence of the trackers, depredations of a more serious character would most assuredly have taken place.<sup>127</sup>

Constable Smith, in charge of the Laura police station advised Inspector Fitzgerald, Cooktown that the blacks in his locality were put to great straits to obtain food as there was very little in the shape of game available, 100 blacks were camped near the Laura terminus. Fitzgerald wrote to the Commissioner on 6 November 1891 seeking approval to supply the blacks once a week, near the terminus, with a beast as this would create a most beneficial effect. The file indicated that the Colonial Secretary approved.<sup>128</sup>

Sub-Inspector Lamond reported on 2 September 1892 that he visited the blacks' camp on the Daintree and was satisfied the government rations were distributed by Masterton to the best advantage. He did not think the rations could be reduced because on average 50 blacks camp there; "If that number can be kept quiet for an expenditure of £6 or £7 monthly as also the orphans and old people, feel it is very good work". He added, as the Native Police camp at Saltwater was not in the Daintree River blacks' country, I do not think it advisable to rush any change to existing arrangements.<sup>129</sup> P MacArthur, Police Magistrate, Port Douglas, 6 December 1892 wrote to the Under Colonial Secretary advising that all the residents on the Daintree were in favour of the distribution of food to the blacks as it prevented them from stealing their produce and articles from their houses. MacArthur added the supply of food should be continued until there was closer settlement of the district. He also advised that the present Aboriginal population consisted of 17 men, 23 women and 20 children. The Colonial Secretary approved the continued supply of rations to the blacks on the Daintree.<sup>130</sup>

The Commissioner of Police forwarded the police report of 1891 to the Colonial Secretary and advised:

A native police station at Musgrave in the Cook district was established and the Mossman native police station closed.

### **THE BLACKS AND OPIUM.**

Ebb Smith of Weribone station, Surat wrote to Mr Morehead MLA on 3 December 1884 regarding the use of opium by the Aboriginals in the surrounding district including the town of Roma. He added that the Chinese were supplying the drug and asked could anything be done to block the sale of the drug. His letter was referred to the Commissioner of Police who on 17 December 1884, advised that it was too late for action this session.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> QSA ITM 289937.

<sup>128</sup> QSA ITM847409 DR69959, 91/13090.

<sup>129</sup> QSA Item ID 6820, 94/1581, 92/11115, frame number 141. Brisbane Courier 27 February 1892 p 6.

<sup>130</sup> QSA Item ID 6820, 94/1581, 92/14804, frame numbers 145-146 & 149.

<sup>131</sup> QSA ITM847140 DR78047, 84/8771.

Mr O C Beardmore of Tooloombah Station, Rockhampton wrote to the Colonial Secretary on 30 July 1886 about the Opium Bill then before the Queensland parliament, advising that all the blacks were fast dying out from Mackay to Rockhampton from the use of charcoal opium. He said the blacks in this district, with very few exceptions, would do nothing except for opium. They give up tobacco, grog, trinkets, everything for opium and, in consequence, were dying off fast. He went on to say he had seen 20 of them in a room lying down with their little lamps, passing the whole night and day smoking till their supply was exhausted.<sup>132</sup> On 10 February 1887, J Stuart, Inspector of Police, Rockhampton advised the Commissioner of Police that the Aboriginals were addicted to opium smoking. He added: "It is impossible to find a blackfellow or gin who is not an opium smoker. It was introduced amongst them by the Chinamen to further their sinister desires for gins; for once a tribe takes to opium, the blackfellows trade their gins for the drug. The opium sold to the blacks by Chinamen is the charcoal or residue of what they have smoked. Opium smoking is gradually decimating all the tribes and, in a very few years, the Aboriginals in this district will have disappeared. The use of the drug has a very marked effect on them. They get emaciated and lazy. As long as they can procure a pipe of opium, they will remain in camp in a dreamy condition."<sup>133</sup>

The *Charleville Times* in 1889, on several occasions, had drawn attention to the unwholesome facts connected with opium traffic in the west; the vice had taken a great hold on the blacks, and in a few years, they would be wiped out in the west. A Chinese trafficker of opium had been caught on the streets of Charleville selling it in sixpenny screws of paper, but the police had no power to deal with him.<sup>134</sup> Barcaldine, 2 August 1890. A blackboy was found lying dead in a stable at Mr Shakespeare's Hotel. The boy was about 15 years of age and came into town with Mr Munday from Rodney Downs. He went by the name of Charlie. He went to an opium den kept by a Chinese named Jimmy Chong and smoked several pipes of the drug. The boy went to the stable to sleep and was heard during the night to be breathing heavily. Mr Munday was unsuccessful next morning in awaking the boy and fetched a doctor, who thought the effects of the opium would be slept off. But instead, the action of the heart became weaker, and at 10 o'clock, the lad was found dead. In his evidence at the inquiry, senior-constable Malone said the Chinaman's hut was a notorious opium den frequented by blacks. When the black tracker and his gin were at the barracks, both he and his gin were quite useless because of opium, and several of the blacks' camp near the town were in a most wretched state from the same cause. The police magistrate severely reprimanded Jimmy Chong and regretted there was no law by which he could be punished.<sup>135</sup>

The aborigines in the Central District were obtaining and consuming opium in large quantities, chiefly by smoking it. Inspector Murray to meet the case determined rigidly to enforce the application of the 13th section of *The Sales and Use of Poisons Act*.<sup>136</sup> This section prohibited the supply of opium to native aborigines, half-castes and kanakas, except for medical purposes, the penalty on conviction for a breach thereof was as high as £10 for the first offence, and £20 for the second.<sup>137</sup>

A telegram from J B White, Police Magistrate at Springsure, 11 January 1892, advised that the police had information that 6 pounds of opium charcoal for local Aborigines had gone to a station in the district from the railway. He asked, "cannot prove sale, can the carriers be prosecuted under

<sup>132</sup> QSA ITM847207 DR78203, 86/6007.

<sup>133</sup> QSA ITM847233 DR78277, 87/4443.

<sup>134</sup> Brisbane Courier 19 December 1889 p 7.

<sup>135</sup> Brisbane Courier 12 August 1890 p 2.

<sup>136</sup> 13. Any person who supplies, or permits to be supplied, any opium to any aboriginal native of Australia or half-caste of that race, or to any aboriginal native of the Pacific Islands, except for medicinal purposes, proof of which shall be on the defendant, shall for the first offence be liable to a penalty not exceeding ten pounds, nor less than two pounds, and for the second and every subsequent offence to a penalty not exceeding twenty pounds, nor less than five pounds, and in every case to the payment of the costs of the conviction. The Sale and Use of Poisons Act, 1891.

<sup>137</sup> Daily Northern Argus 22 January 1892 p 5.

section 17." A note on the telegram from Tozer stated: "No, but it would be advisable to secure this material, if at all possible, for examination".<sup>138</sup>

R A Moore, Police Magistrate in Charleville telegraphed asking when Chinese convicted of selling opium to aborigines, can he order police to destroy paraphernalia such as pipes, lamps, etc. found on premises? Also, does the Poisons Act permit the police, under search warrant, to seize opium in well-known dens where drug sold and blacks supplied? He also advised two boxes containing about sixty tins of opium were delivered by train to a Chinaman, the keeper of an opium den. On 20 January 1892, Tozer advised, "No, fine is the only penalty."<sup>139</sup>

Maytown, February 29, 1892. Several of the civilised blacks were buying opium from the Chinese. A tracker discharged from the local police barracks used to eat it. It had the usual soporific effect, making them dull and very stupid. The police were on the watch to catch any person selling or giving opium away.<sup>140</sup> On 13 October 1892, H C Brock-Hollinshead of Planet Downs, Rolleston advised the Colonial Secretary that the law to stop the traffic of opium charcoal to the aborigines in Rolleston and most other bush towns was a dead letter. The local police could not obtain evidence. He suggested that the possession of opium charcoal which was solely supplied to Aboriginals be made illegal and that unknown (undercover) detectives be employed to go around the bush towns and assist the police in putting an end to the trafficking of the drug. The Colonial Secretary advised that the police were instructed to stop the abominable trade.<sup>141</sup>

Roma Police Court 22 October 1894, Ah Chit was charged with supplying opium on 10 and 16 October 1894 to John Serico, a half-cast aboriginal. Inspector Douglas prosecuted. John Serico, a police tracker, deposed on 10 October he went to Chinatown, accompanied by Senior Constable Johnston and Constable Brett. Serico said he had bought opium whenever he wanted it from nearly every Chinaman in Roma. After Douglas closed the police case, Ah Chit's solicitor raised five points of law. One objection was that there was no evidence that Serico was a half-cast which the Poisons Act required. The court overruled the solicitor, convicted Ah Chit and fined him with costs. The solicitor then gave notice of appeal and asked that the order of the court be suspended for four days. Inspector Douglas also asked the court for an order that Serico was to receive £1 out of the fine in each case. On 27 November 1894, Ah Chit's solicitor wrote to the Under Secretary for Justice regarding the case. The Crown Solicitor advised the conviction could not stand. Consequently, the conviction was quashed and the fine refunded.<sup>142</sup>

John Douglas, Resident, Thursday Island on 10 January 1896 wrote to the Colonial Secretary that there was increased sale of opium in Torres Strait. He strongly recommended that further legislative action be taken to restrict and regulate the sale of opium because *The Sale and Use of Poisons Act of 1891* was not sufficiently elastic and definite to admit the easy conviction of offenders. Tozer on 1 March 1896 wrote on the face of Douglas's letter, "Chief Secretary, Legislation is called for on this head."<sup>143</sup>

Since it became an offence against the statute law of Queensland for any person to supply Aboriginals with opium, there were numerous convictions of Chinese storekeepers. As the fines inflicted were so heavy, it was thought the new law would effectually stamp out the practice,

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<sup>138</sup> QSA ITM847415 DR69973, 92/391.

<sup>139</sup> QSA ITM847416 DR69975, 92/754.

<sup>140</sup> Brisbane Courier 11 March 1892 p 2. Queenslander 19 March 1892 p 534.

<sup>141</sup> QSA ITM847443 DR53881, 92/12481.

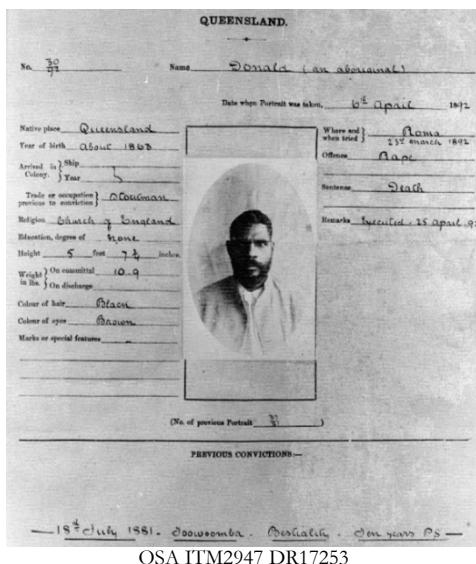
<sup>142</sup> Western Star and Roma Advertiser 24 October 1894 p 2 & 1 December 1894 p 2. QSA ITM847518 DR65359, 94/13646.

<sup>143</sup> QSA Item ID 6826 DR57632, 96/2538, frame numbers 1-4 & 5-17.

protect the untutored savage from the greed of his bland and childlike brother alien, and put an end to traffic which was universally admitted to be worse than the sale of intoxicating liquor. Yet the result desired had not been achieved. Chinese storekeepers had been penalised by fines, law expenses, and experts' analyses equal to £14 for each shilling's worth of opium sold. This had not prevented storekeepers from selling the drug, and there were instances, not only in Longreach and Barcaldine, of men having once or twice been convicted. But from nearly every town of the colony where the blacks were frequent visitors, the same reports had been received that the trade was still carried on despite the frequent convictions of offenders. It was doubtful whether the Chinese storekeeper was altogether to blame for the spread of opium eating among the Aboriginals. It was notorious that many camps of blackfellows were paid for work done in opium by white men. It was well known that blacks would undertake any work from mustering sheep to scrub clearing if they were given a small allowance of food and a trifling present of opium.<sup>144</sup>

### THE BLACKS AT TAROOM.

Roma, March 21. At the Supreme Court before Mr Justice Real, Donald, the blackfellow, was found guilty of the rape of Eva Scott, a Taroom married woman, on or about January 1892, and sentenced to death. He was executed at Boggo-road Gaol, at 8 am on 25 April 1892. As a result of atrocities committed by Donald and others, the inhabitants of Taroom were in a state of terror. Furthermore, Aboriginals frequently made raids on the houses in town and the women of Taroom were in a state of alarm. They did not feel safe to leave their homes after dark.<sup>145</sup>



The largest and most influential public meeting ever held in Taroom took place at Speering's store on the night of 16 February 1892. The meeting was convened to urge upon the Colonial Secretary the necessity of keeping the blacks out of town between the hours of sunset and sunrise, and also to remove an erroneous opinion held by the inspector of police touching the action of the townspeople in removing the aborigines. He had been misled on the subject. Although the idea of calling a meeting while the inspector was in town was only mooted about sundown, by 8.30 pm every family (with one exception) sent a representative to the meeting. Mr Morisset, inspector of police, was invited to attend. Mr Morisset, however, declined on the ground that it was a public meeting. Mr Ryder was voted to the chair. He said that had the police been stricter in keeping the

<sup>144</sup> Western Champion and General Advertiser for the Central-Western Districts 25 February 1896 p 8.

<sup>145</sup> Brisbane Courier 6 February 1892 p 3, 24 March 1892 p 5 & 26 April 1892 p 5. QPG Vol. XXIX] 2 April 1892 [No. 14, p 151.

blacks out of town and punished the vendors of opium, the present trouble would never have arisen. Everyone knew of the outrages recently committed in the town and district.

Dr S E Pointon moved the first resolution, "That in the opinion of this meeting, the Colonial Secretary be requested to adopt some means by which the blacks can be kept out of the town between the hours of sunset and sunrise." This was seconded by Mr Bradshaw and carried unanimously. Mr Hyde then moved, "That the Colonial Secretary's attention be again drawn to the depraving influence of opium upon the blacks of this district, and that he brings to justice the vendors of that drug." Mr Hyde said almost all the thefts committed by the blacks in the town were due to opium. Jimmy Reid's atrocities were all due to opium; he escaped from the police (whilst being taken to Miles) to obtain that drug. The blacks were in a high state of demoralisation at present, and this was chiefly owing to opium and alcohol. Mr Ashton seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously and with acclamation.<sup>146</sup>

Maytown, February 29, 1892. Another murder was committed by the Palmerville blacks; they killed a Chinaman named Sup Gee about seven miles up the river. No particulars were to hand yet. Troopers and white police were in pursuit. The body had not been found. The blacks looted the hut, and traces of them were observable about the locality. The Chinese residents sent a petition to the Government for the re-establishment of a native police camp at Palmerville. In the last twelve months, five Chinamen had been killed by the blacks.<sup>147</sup> A native police camp was to be formed near Palmerville, at Fairlight, about thirty miles from the town.<sup>148</sup>

Charles Denford, California Creek via Herberton on 7 April 1892, wrote to W C Little MLA

The Aboriginals have been thieving rations from the miner's camps. There are often from 150 to 200 of them in at a time and I have at my expense been feeding them. I intend making application to the government for remuneration and I would esteem it a favour if you would direct me as to the proper department.<sup>149</sup>

A H Zillman, Police Magistrate, Herberton, 6 June 1892 wrote to the Under Colonial Secretary.

I was unable to proceed to California Creek. I requested Sub-Inspector Lamond to inquire into the blacks' conditions. His report is enclosed. Mr Bigham might be allowed to give the blacks 100 pounds of beef weekly. This would meet the case.<sup>150</sup>

Thursday Island, July 4. It is stated that tribal fighting has taken place amongst the natives on the mainland. It is reported that some natives have obtained firearms and ammunition and that several were killed and wounded. Sub-Inspector Savage, accompanied by other members of the Police Force, left by the *Albatross* on Saturday last to disarm the natives and restore order. The *Albatross* returned this evening, having left the police on the mainland near Red Island, near Paterson.<sup>151</sup> Cooktown, July 8. Sub-Inspector Savage, with Senior-constable Conroy, and five troopers, returned from the mainland yesterday. The police visited a tribe about 40 miles inland from Red Island and secured three rifles that had been used by the owners to some effect in a dispute with a neighbouring tribe. Information was obtained from a tribe, which will probably necessitate the police paying a visit to the east coast, where a tribe was said to possess arms and

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<sup>146</sup> Brisbane Courier 26 February 1892 p 6. QSA ITM847420 DR56541, 92/2425.

<sup>147</sup> Brisbane Courier 11 March 1892 p 2. Queenslander 19 March 1892 p 534.

<sup>148</sup> Brisbane Courier 16 April 1892 p 3. QSA ITM847421 DR51031, 92/2740, (in 1892, 8,585 pairs of blankets were distributed at 152 centres).

<sup>149</sup> QSA Item ID 6820, 92/4723, frame number 104.

<sup>150</sup> QSA Item ID 6820, 92/7165, frame number 109.

<sup>151</sup> Toowoomba Chronicle and Darling Downs General Advertiser 7 July 1892 p 4.

ammunition, alleged to have been obtained from coloured bêche-de-mere fishers. One rifle secured by the police was stolen from Mr Jardine's station.<sup>152</sup>

A petition from the residents of the Murray River and Tully River district was sent to the Colonial Secretary in November 1892 requesting the stationing of one man and two troopers for protection because the Aboriginals have been a continual drawback by their wholesale destruction of cattle, plundering cultivation paddocks, and robbing houses at every opportunity. The Commissioner advised that he had instructed Constable Splaine of Cardwell to patrol the district as frequently as possible.<sup>153</sup>

The Commissioner of Police forwarded the police report of 1892 to the Colonial Secretary and advised:

Native police stations at Fairlight and Mossman River (temporarily) were opened in the Cook District and Normanby native police station in the Cook district was closed.

On or about 11 November 1893, a petition from the residents of the Murray and Tully Rivers to the Colonial Secretary requested Native Police protection. The bulk of the settlers were engaged in dairying and they alleged their stock for years past had been destroyed by the Aboriginals. The Commissioner advised there was a detachment of Native Police at Stewarts Creek, 8 kilometres south-west of Geraldton, who could patrol the district and instructions had been given accordingly.<sup>154</sup>

On 28 March 1895, the residents of the Tully and Murray River district again petitioned for Native Police protection. It had been over a year and nothing was done. On 9 March, Mr W G Ewan's station was robbed and the buildings and stores burnt. This was the seventh property destroyed by fire by the blacks. They requested a police officer and two troopers be stationed in the district. The Commissioner on 14 June 1895 advised "It would require another detachment of Native Police to patrol this district effectively. The selectors and cattle owners do not sufficiently protect themselves; they leave their homes without anyone to look after them and then the blacks steal and destroy". Tozer, the Colonial Secretary, 18 June 1895 directed "the Commissioner of Police to arrange for the necessary police protection in this locality. If a distribution of food could be arranged by some competent person near this place, all outrages would cease. I prefer this if it can be arranged to native police". Tozer also allowed £180 per annum for food distribution at Cardwell.<sup>155</sup>

Townsville, December 14. A police constable and three black trackers were despatched from Townsville to form a camp in the Cardwell district and will patrol the Tully and Murray River districts to afford protection to the settlers from the Aboriginals. It was also proposed to distribute food to the blacks in times of scarcity.<sup>156</sup> Sub-Inspector O'Driscoll would visit the district to assure himself that the wishes of the department were being carried out correctly.<sup>157</sup>

Henry Chester, PM, of Cooktown on a visit to Rossdale and Ayton in November 1893, informed the Colonial Secretary that the miners complained about the Aboriginals stealing their possessions while they were away at their claims. The miners requested an increased police presence in the

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<sup>152</sup> Northern Miner 9 July 1892 p 2.

<sup>153</sup> QSA ITM847446 DR85523, 92/13406.

<sup>154</sup> QSA Item ID 6820, 96/13634, 93/13223, frame numbers 397-399.

<sup>155</sup> QSA Item ID 6820 96/13634, 95/7054, frame number 405-406 & frame numbers 408-410.

<sup>156</sup> Brisbane Courier 16 December 1895 p 5.

<sup>157</sup> Week 3 January 1896 p 13.

district. Chester recommended the appointment of Mr W Collins as a JP and the supply of a dinghy to the local police. The Colonial Secretary approved the recommendations.<sup>158</sup>

The Commissioner of Police forwarded the police report of 1893 to the Colonial Secretary and advised:

Native police stations at Fairlight and Mossman River (temporarily) were closed in the Cook District and McIvor native police station in the Cook district was reopened.

The residents of McIvor Creek, Morgan Creek, Starcke Creek and Cocoa Creek districts petitioned the Colonial Secretary in January 1894 not to remove the Native Police camp from McIvor Creek. The Commissioner advised the Colonial Secretary that, "The camp has already been broken up and shifted to Eight Mile Station from which place the Ivor country can be worked at far less expense".<sup>159</sup>

### **BLACKS IN THE CAPE YORK PENINSULA — FREQUENCY OF OUTRAGES — A REMEDY DEMANDED.**

The sittings of the Supreme Court here the week before last (says the *Norman Chronicle*) have evoked grave doubts as to the fitness of things in relation to the Aboriginal question in the Gulf Country and throughout the Cape York Peninsula. Three men were charged with shooting Aboriginals—Edward Cook, for committing the crime of murder at Flannigan's Creek; Ah Sam, a Chinaman, for shooting a blackfellow at the Carron River, both localities being near Croydon; and Thomas McLean, for shooting an Aboriginal at Delta station. Five Aboriginals were charged with the committal of two murders—Boko, a native trooper of Camooweal, charged with carving up another of his race; Johnny, Charlie, Brodie, and Wallaby, accused of murdering another town black, in Normanton. Edward Cook and Ah Sam were found not guilty from the conflicting nature of the evidence given by Aboriginal witnesses. The four blacks for murder at this place were discharged and let loose on society, because only Aboriginals were able to give evidence, and there was no interpreter. Boko got three months for maliciously wounding, and Thomas McLean, accused of shooting a blackfellow at Delta station was remanded till the next sittings of the court (not less than six months), bail being refused, because a material witness, who was previously charged with him, had been let go without being bound over as a witness to the case. Why this man, McLean, should be so incarcerated is a mystery, and only to be solved by the Judge, who has all the peculiarities inherent to our colonial Judges. The remand is a manifest piece of injustice to the man, in the broad light of facts, when no less than six other men are let free for insufficient evidence. The news will travel from camp to camp among the blacks from here to Cape York, and the consequence will be more outrages. Indeed, since McLean's incarceration, a poor old man named Ferguson has been wantonly speared to death at Mentana station, and although the police could go out to serve a summons on a witness in McLean's case, they made no endeavour to secure the murderer of poor old Ferguson. This laxity has given the blacks courage, and they have now speared Du Moulin, the manager of Mentana. On Thursday, the inspector, Mr Graham, accompanied by Dr Cunningham, some police and trackers, left town by the *Vigilant* for the scene of the outrage, had they done their duty weeks ago Du Moulin would not have been speared. Further, news has arrived that the diggers on the Batavia River have been attacked, and Baird, the prospector, killed. It is the duty of the Government to protect whites and blacks alike. It is also their duty to take the Aboriginal question in hand and do something to prevent a war of extermination. White men dare not go about the country here unarmed, and especially so on the peninsula. Fear leads the whites to wage war on the blacks, innocent and guilty alike, and such outrages beget revenge on the part of the Aboriginals. It is said of whites that they are in the habit of shooting blacks because of their depredations, and it is known that the blackfellows revenge themselves when opportunity offers. Something must be done to prevent such outrages, and we see

<sup>158</sup> QSA ITM847485 DR60667, 93/13791.

<sup>159</sup> QSA ITM847489 DR60689, 94/449.

no other plan for it but to gather the blacks on a reserve, and under just supervision, to keep them from committing excesses, and prevent others from molesting them. It is a degradation to us that the blacks are left to die out since we have taken possession of all their hunting grounds. It is a further degradation to us to have them herding about our towns shiftlessly, where they gather to themselves the vices of mean whites and become diseased and brutal beyond hope of recovery. There are Christian men and women in this land who deplore the condition of our Aboriginals. Sympathy and condemnation are insufficient to cope with the evil, but a determined endeavour must force the Government to do their duty and to end forever the evil state of things that at present exists.<sup>160</sup>

Telegram of 28 June 1894, from R Donald at Laura to the Colonial Treasurer read:

Great anxiety here through fear of what must happen in the near future from depredations from blacks if the Laura detachment of Native Police are removed to Mein. No protection nearer than Maytown please urge on Commissioner to let camp remain. The Colonial Secretary advised that the Commissioner proposed to have police and a tracker at Laura.<sup>161</sup>

Cooktown, May 4. The Government decided to extend the Thursday Island police district to the adjacent island and the Eastern and Western coast of the Northern peninsula. The whole coast was to be patrolled by a steamer in the charge of Sub-Inspector Urquhart, who holds a Master Mariner's Certificate. It is not yet decided where Sub-Inspector Savage, of Thursday Island, will be transferred to, but his long service there will not be overlooked. Sub-Inspector Cooper, of the Coen, will succeed Urquhart, at Cloncurry.<sup>162</sup>

A petition from the miners at Mount Romeo via Cooktown dated 6 June 1894 to the Colonial Secretary requested Native Police protection because the Aboriginals had robbed their camps of rations and clothes while they were away working. Inspector Fitzgerald advised that one of the ringleaders was arrested and committed to Townsville gaol for six months. Furthermore, police intelligence suggested it was gins who were about the camps for immoral purposes.<sup>163</sup>

### THE SHEARING STRIKE — BLACK TRACKERS FOR THE WEST.

A considerable crowd assembled on 5 September 1894 at the Rockhampton wharf to witness the arrival of a detachment of 13 native police by the s.s. *Cintra* from the north. They were brought by the tender from the bay, landed at the wharf at 4.30 pm, and marched to the police barracks. Nine of the boys were from Cooktown under the charge of Senior-Constable Whiteford, and the remainder from Nigger Creek, Cairns under the charge of Senior-Constable Portley. They were a fine-looking lot of Aboriginals, and were said to include the pick of the trackers in the north. They left for the west by the mail train and were accompanied by Mr D T Seymour, Commissioner of Police. The destination of the boys was kept secret.<sup>164</sup>

The Commissioner of Police forwarded the police report of 1894 to the Colonial Secretary and advised:

The shearing strike which began unexpectedly at Oondooroo, where a man was knocked down when entering the office to sign an agreement in the presence of one of the owners and several of the station employees, none of whom could identify the assailant, took a more serious turn when quickly followed up by the burning of Ayrshire Downs woolshed by a band of armed men, none of whom were recognised. Apart from the burning of woolsheds, the crimes were fewer than

<sup>160</sup> Brisbane Courier 1 June 1894 p 6.

<sup>161</sup> QSA ITM847506 DR63811, 94/7435 & ITM847506 DR63813, 94/7688.

<sup>162</sup> Mackay Mercury 5 May 1894 p 2.

<sup>163</sup> QSA ITM847509 DR63822, 94/9030. Anderson, Christopher. "Aborigines and Tin Mining in North Queensland: A Case Study in the Anthropology of Contact History". *Mankind*, 13, no. 6, April (1983): pp. 473-497.

<sup>164</sup> Daily Northern Argus 6 September 1894 p 3. Morning Bulletin 6 September 1894 p 4.

commencement threatened, the most serious offences being the determined attack on Dagworth woolshed, where over forty shots were exchanged, but fortunately, none of the defenders were injured, and no traces or tracks of the attacking party could be discovered next morning; and the shooting of a man at Coombermartin. At this place, there was a party of police present, and the man who fired the shot was at once arrested, and the threatened riot quelled. During the time the strike lasted, seventy-eight men were arrested, of whom forty-four were convicted, and after the Coombermartin riot, offences other than the burning of sheds became fewer and more trivial until near the end of September 1894, when the strike was declared off. Native police stations at Stewart's Creek, McIvor and Laura were closed in the Cook District and Piccaninny Creek in the Cape York Peninsula opened.

Senior Constable Whiteford with 13 troopers left Longreach by train, which arrived in Rockhampton on 7 January 1895 and then left for Cairns and Cooktown by the *Arawatta*. Sub-Inspector Chauvel and 20 constables also left Longreach by train for the coast. It is understood that the police were not able to capture any of the shed burners, but they were successful in preventing any more buildings being set on fire.<sup>165</sup>

W E Parry-Okeden was appointed Commissioner of Police on 1 July 1895, in the room of D T Seymour, retired.<sup>166</sup> He was appointed to the public service on 1 December 1870, and to Principal Under-Secretary on 24 July 1889, at £800 per annum. In 1894, Mr Parry-Okeden filled the position of District Magistrate in the west under the Peace Preservation Act, and in that trying capacity won the confidence and regard of all parties.<sup>167</sup>

Cooktown, December 14. Reports from the Rocky River goldfield were to the effect that the blacks from the inland were so troublesome that unless a constable and trooper were stationed on the field, serious results were likely to ensue. The miners' camps were being robbed every day with impunity, and even if the men used their firearms, it would be difficult for them to cope with the natives owing to the dense scrub. If no police protection were to be afforded, the men would either have to take decisive steps to protect their property or leave the field. Already several men had left the Rocky because there was no protection against the inland natives.<sup>168</sup>



W. E. Parry-Okeden, State Library of Queensland.

The Commissioner of Police forwarded the police report of 1895 to the Colonial Secretary and advised: I regret to say that depredations by the blacks in the Cook and Burke districts were numerous.

<sup>165</sup> Western Champion and General Advertiser for the Central-Western Districts 8 January 1895 pp 7-8.

<sup>166</sup> Brisbane Courier 1 July 1895 p 6.

<sup>167</sup> Brisbane Courier 12 June 1895 p 5.

<sup>168</sup> Queenslander 21 December 1895 p 1159.

## EDITORIAL — BATAVIA RIVER MISSIONS.

In the open country in the Gulf, hostile blacks have disappeared, but in the scrubs on the fertile ranges of the northeast coast and even in the forest of York's Peninsula, there are still many myalls and the lone prospector takes his life in his hands when he sets out alone in a quest for minerals. Within the last month, one white man has been speared at the Rocky Goldfield, but not fatally, another has been killed there by blacks and Mr McKenzie, the other day, was clubbed to death at his Lakefield station. The murder of the young mailman to the Rocky is of recent date, and at a moderate estimate for years past there must have been at least twelve lives per annum on an average sacrificed by blacks in North Queensland. This is a serious butcher's bill; civilisation and settlement are considerably retarded, and the loss to the country is very great. If during the last ten years, the sum spent on the Native Police had been devoted to buying "bullocks" for the wandering blacks, we are firmly of the opinion that there would not be a myall "out" today. In the Herberton scrubs, near Atherton, settlers were robbed and alarmed by the blacks of the locality, but as soon as the Government established a camp there and gave the blacks some beef occasionally, the depredations ceased. With cattle at £2 a head or less, every black, north of the Herbert, could be feasted for three or four thousand pounds a year. The Mission station at Mapoon, and the one to be established on the Embley would be two good distributing centres: and the cattle stations or the telegraph stations on the Cape York line could also be utilised.<sup>169</sup>

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY — 7 OCTOBER 1896.

Mr Tozer, Home Secretary:

Mr Meston had been selected to report on the position of the Aboriginals. His report, which was a comprehensive one, was now being printed. He thought that the report would indicate that the Government would be bound to legislate to prevent many of the abuses that had been heard of for the first time. As a preliminary, the Commissioner of Police was about to make a personal investigation and do away with the native police force as an aggressive force. If Mr Meston was correct, there were 25,000 Aboriginals in Queensland, though he (Mr Tozer) thought there were not more than 10,000. He hoped to collect those in the Southern districts of Queensland from about the towns and work them onto the mission stations at Durundur and Deebing Creek, where they could make a home for themselves, probably self-supporting. Reserves might be set apart at Cape Grafton and in the Central district as homes for them. It would not be advisable to interfere with their freedom. He would recommend the establishment of three stations in the Peninsula. The blacks should be made to understand that the policy of the whites was to treat them kindly, and food would be distributed through the agency of the police, to make the blacks understand that instead of being their enemies they were their friends. He had very little hope of any practical results from the mission stations. They were all selected on the worst sites, and the well-meant efforts of the missionaries had been wrongly directed. So far as the Government could countenance their efforts, they would not be interfered with, and where they could be utilised as distributing food stations they would be so used.<sup>170</sup>

## ABORIGINALS OF QUEENSLAND — MR A. MESTON'S REPORT.

The report on the Aboriginals of Queensland, by Mr Archibald Meston (special commissioner, under Instructions from the Queensland Government), was presented to Parliament by the Home Secretary on 20 October 1896.

### THE NATIVE POLICE.

For the police of this colony, as a class, I have ever had a specially friendly feeling, and the admiration honestly deserved by an honourable and effective body of men; but there are some who,

<sup>169</sup> North Queensland Register 13 May 1896 p 4, abridged.

<sup>170</sup> Brisbane Courier 8 October 1896 p 7.

for various reasons, are utterly unfitted to have any voice or power of action or any business whatever with the Aboriginals either in peace or war, and ought under no circumstances whatever to be placed in charge of native police. . . The native police have been maintained at a heavy cost, as the Estimates and expenditure records will show. One-third of that cost expended for the friendly benefit of the blacks would have been immeasurably more effective in promoting peace and have left an infinitely nobler record behind. The system is an anomaly in the present period of Queensland history and requires the earliest possible abolition. If possessed of a correct knowledge of the work of this force, I am certain the present government would not tolerate it for another year, nor would the present Commissioner of Police. Under a proper friendly system, quite practicable if properly administered, and certain in its results, the whole Aboriginal population of the Cape York Peninsula and Gulf rivers would be effectively controlled, induced to readily give up their criminals, and peace be maintained between them and the settlers for one-third of the cost of the present unsatisfactory order of things. . . Native women are everywhere a source of discord between the races. Kidnapping of boys and girls is another serious evil. Both have been the causes of many murders and many crimes very little better than murder. Boys and girls are frequently taken from their parents and their tribes, and removed far off, whence they have no chance of returning; left helpless at the mercy of those who possess them, white people responsible to no one and under no supervision by any proper authority. Some are admirably treated, and others are badly used. Stringent legislation is required to prevent a continuance of abuses concerning women and children.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The total abolition of the native police, and all police duty among Aboriginals to be done by white men, with an unarmed tracker in localities where trackers may be necessary. These trackers would also be available to track lost whites or criminals of our race. No native police officer under the old system, and no constable in any way connected with that system, should be retained for police duty among Aboriginals under the proposed new order of things.
2. Absolute prohibition of all Aboriginal labour on pearlshell, bêche-de-mer, and tortoiseshell fishing boats under any conditions whatever.
3. The total exclusion from townships of Aboriginals of all ages, except those in the regular employment of whites, properly registered, and their wages and good treatment guaranteed under stringent regulations.
4. Imprisonment for anyone found guilty of selling them drink or opium. A fine is not sufficient.
5. A severe penalty provided for any whites who are found with aboriginal blankets in their possession.
6. That the mission stations be regarded as food-distributing centres and one public tenderer receives the contract for supplying them all. Maizemeal should be given in place of flour, to be used as bread or porridge with molasses. The overland telegraph stations on the Cape York line to be food centres and places of refuge for the adjoining tribes.
7. That "aboriginal reserves" be created in South, Central, and North Queensland, where certain of the Aboriginals can be collected to form a permanent home, marry and beget children, and live happily, free from all contact with the white race, except those placed in charge to see that order is established, their allotted food supplies distributed, and teach them gardening and farming, to make the reserves as far as possible, if not altogether, self-supporting.
8. That at least 100 acres of the nearest available good land be given for agricultural purposes to each of the Deebing Creek, Bloomfield, and Cape Bedford Mission Stations so that they can employ the Aboriginals at useful and productive work.
9. That the Home Secretary assume sole control of the Myora Station, place it in charge of the schoolmaster, assisted by one of the half-caste women in the position of matron; the food for the old people and children to be sent weekly from Dunwich.
10. That Aboriginals when sober and decently clothed, be allowed to travel free on any of our railways.
11. That a protector and assistant protector be appointed, charged solely with the care and supervision of the Aboriginals.
12. One or two of these recommendations are made on the assumption that the Aboriginals are to be allowed unfettered liberty to roam about and mix with the whites, as at present.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Brisbane Courier 21 October 1896 p 6, abridged.

## THE BLACK PROTECTORATE — TO THE EDITOR.

Doing a quiet "think" after assimilating that report of Mr Meston's, as it appeared in the *Queenslander* of 24 October, the unprejudiced outsider, taking it as a true statement of facts with reasonable deductions therefrom, must exclaim, with a feeling of horror and indignation, "What unmitigated scoundrels and murderers those North Queensland pioneers must have been."

Now, is Mr Meston honest in this? On personal grounds, I dare say Mr Meston had no quill to sharpen against the early pioneers, any more than I, on the same grounds, have any reason to blunt a pen in their defence. He libels people he does not know; I try to do justice to people I do know.

Against the argument that the natives were all a quiet, moral people until the white men came amongst them, I can appeal over the length and breadth of Queensland to men whose repute, integrity, and experience are equal to Mr Meston's, and I am satisfied that 90 percent of the pioneers who went "into the wilderness with their flocks and herds" will say they found the natives cunning, treacherous, cruel, utterly intractable, and with the merest glimmer of moral honesty. Their friendship could never be relied on with safety, their enmity had to be always guarded against. Taking the dominant elements of savage and "uncivilised" races all over the world, it would be considered foolishly absurd for anyone to contend that those elements are favourable to the undisturbed settlement of white men amongst them—a strange race, with strange customs, manners, and pursuits. And to say that if the white men went entirely unarmed and unprotected, and interfered neither with the women, nor the game nor the customs of the inhabitants, they (the white men) would be safe in person and property. It might be all right, but I don't think Mr Meston would be the one to try it. He had plenty of cartridges and a splendid shooting iron with him last time he went through, though he was never off the telegraph line or a main road, when inland, and was never, under any circumstances without a guide or escort.

The genesis of the whole matter is: The Peninsula natives were no different to the natives in any other part of Australia. The white man was a fear and a mystery to them, and he was a temptation to them with the strange luggage and etceteras he had around him. Killing was not the awful thought with them that it is with us, so they killed or tried to kill. Lex talionis was the only law in the country. The repeated, and again repeated statement that white men murdered by the blacks merit their fate, is a lie as vicious as it is ignorant. I will admit that some white men have well-deserved retributive justice. But did it overtake them, they were too much on their guard. But it dropped on some unsuspecting and entirely innocent victim whose (white) colour sealed his doom, Young Bannon, a boy about 16 years of age, was killed and eaten—just take note of it: eaten—by the blacks within twenty miles of the Coen goldfield not eighteen months ago; (he) had not been a week on the Coen and had never been in the country where he was killed. So, Mr Meston will (you) kindly say what that poor lad had done to merit his fate. He was running her Majesty's mail from the Coen to the Rocky River, and in looking for his horse on the second morning out got lost. He must have been nearly dead with hunger when the blacks got him, and—they ate him. And it may be here stated that those same blacks (or at least some of the same tribe) had previously brought into the Coen several diggers who had been lost in the same strip of country. Likely enough they killed and ate some whose names or whose fate will never be known, but it establishes the fact that not the slightest reliance can be placed on their behaviour from one day to another. Talking a few whose names occur to me at the moment, will Mr Meston dare say that by any inhuman cruelty to the blacks, they deserved the ghastly death meted out to them? Old Donald McKenzie, of Lakefield station, Massey, Watson, Nott—was their fate a merited retributive justice? Poor old "Bill" Baird, killed while working on the Batavia goldfield, which he had discovered—did he earn the spears that went through him like a pincushion? It will not do to say they suffered for the sins of other people. Where is the safety in that smug assertion for me or any other traveller going amongst those people? Will Mr Meston hold them excusable for infinity to murder and destroy when they can because in previous years white settlers defended their lives at rifle range, which, luckily for the settlers, reached farther than the spear? Has Mr Meston the hypocrisy to say that if he encountered a mob of blacks, and if even his persuasive eloquence was not able to keep a spear from slipping, maybe accidentally, out of one of their hands and musically hissing within a few inches of his head—does he ask us to believe that he wouldn't shoot? Of course, he would! And, some time afterwards; some unfortunate going along without a shooting iron at all would get immolated by those blacks in "revenge" for Mr Meston holding his own against them, and then Mr Meston would sit down and write a report and say that

luckless white earned the deserved fate of "retributive justice." Oh, pass the mustard! Native troopers have been guilty of unnecessary slaughter now and then, but, make the charge against them as damning as you like, and then look at the other side of the picture. Who, of the hundreds who stood on that cliff-top with spears in their hands, who of them all killed Bill Baird? Would it be moral justice to take merely the owners of the lucky spears that found anchorage in the body of the victim, and let the fellows with a bad aim go unharmed? The troopers distribute a level, all-round sort of justice—a bit rough at times. But we consider this a sad but unpreventable evil and go our ways. So are the Queensland native police, with not half the same amount of evil attached. Why are not more people killed in the North? Well, principally because of the native police.

In our time, the persuasive presence of the trooper is of infinitely more benefit amongst the blacks than half-a-dozen "protectors," each of them graduates with honours. I say in all seriousness that the removal or lessening of the police protection in the Peninsula, and the abrupt inauguration of a system of protectors in lieu of them, as proposed by Mr Meston, will lead to trouble and danger.

The law as regards native murderers is a force without parallel in any country in the world. Fancy a native arrested red-handed after murdering a white man for goods. Fancy the Judge discharging the native because the interpreter could not explain, as he was honest enough to admit, the phrase "maliciously wounding," because there was no aboriginal word for "maliciously". The murderer is alive today. I could quote many cases of the same kind.

It is arrant nonsense to say that an assistant protector with a tracker, both without firearms of any kind, will arrest, say, four or five, or maybe twenty, participants in a murder. It is the rifle in the trooper's hand, even if he never uses it; that is the main factor in the vindication of the law. Take away the rifle and you will find the tracker takes very few risks by going too near the lair of the man or men wanted by justice. This may read brutal, but it is what you, or you, or you would do if the cause came home to you. And in contradistinction to the pleasant flowing calumnies of Mr Meston, it somehow seems to do a person good to be coarse and literal. I presume the hon member for Cook will have something to say in the House before the recommendations of the report are adopted. M W Shanahan. Cape York, 14 November.<sup>172</sup>

Messrs Grandison Watson and Leopold Watson, of Merluna station, Cape York Peninsula:

Mr Meston has estimated the number of blacks north of the 17th parallel at 20,000 head. He has had no opportunity of forming even a reasonable guess at it. Others here much better qualified by continuous travelling all over the Peninsula believe that 8000 would be much nearer the mark. Mr Meston displays a woful [sic] ignorance of the country he was sent to inspect. He says the whole eastern watershed north of the McIvor is, with the exception of a few miners, in absolute possession of the wild tribes. Now, there are five cattle stations in the locality he mentions and a quartz-crushing plant that cannot keep the various claims clear of stone. Besides all this, the road from Coen to Port Stewart passes through this portion, upon which there are constantly travelling four teams of packhorses, two horse teams, and three bullock wagons, carrying supplies to the mining population of the Coen, which is situated about five miles from the watershed on the western side. The Batavia River itself carried a mining population of over 600 white men for a short time, many of whom had been prospecting over some of the ground traversed by Mr Meston. Mr Meston, during his ninety-six miles' ride in the Peninsula, was never away from the beaten tracks known to all the settlers, and certainly never was in a place in that vast territory which knows not the foot of a white man.

Mr Meston gives the blacks credit for never having interfered with a single official, while in his opinion they could have easily speared every soul in the service. But will he not acknowledge the deterring effect of the native police patrol of the district, and the fact that line repairers always went along the lines in couples, well-armed for their safety? The telegraph line runs along the main road of the peninsula, a road that had been in use by the settlers before the wire was stretched. The blacks, however, have cut and stolen the wire in different places, and at various times, and have even taken horses out of the telegraph paddock and killed them. Mr Meston says that along the Peninsula, from time to time, there have been white men speared by the blacks, but that most of them were killed under provocation. In the year 1889, the squatters north of the Archer agreed to try the feeding scheme, killing bullocks for the blacks, and distributing flour. One of the results of this kindness was

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<sup>172</sup> Queenslander 12 December 1896 p 1128 & 2 January 1897 p 22.

that they stabbed to death Mr E. Watson while asleep in his hammock at Pine-tree station, and at the same time almost killed James Evans by chopping him through the jaw with an axe, William Nicoll and a Chinaman escaping unhurt because they were inside the humpy, the other two having slept on the veranda. Can Mr Meston point out the provocation? The feeding scheme was tried by Mr Locke Kennedy, manager of York Downs station. The blacks were employed in clearing around the station and were well-fed. They stole firearms and ammunition, coaxed the station blacks away, attempted to shoot Mr Kennedy, killed a large number of cattle, and tomahawked the horses. Can Mr Meston point out the provocation here? When the gold rush was on at the Batavia River, the blacks were employed by the miners to carry their wash dirt to the water. After the rush was over, Mr Wm. Baird and two other miners remained behind; the blacks attacked the three of them while working in a trench, killing Baird, and wounding the other two. Can Mr Meston put his finger on any provocation here? In 1895, P. Bannon, mailman, was killed by blacks while going from Coen to Rocky. He was a stranger in the district, having just arrived from Cooktown to run this mail; this was his first trip. Can Mr Meston show where the provocation comes in here? In 1895 Richard Slight, last seen on Archer River, about six miles from Langhi station, en route to Pine-tree station, was never heard of after. Blacks' tracks were numerous where his tracks were lost, and his pannikin was found in the blacks' camp. Slight was a stranger in the district, and surely Mr Meston would have trouble in finding the provocation in this case. In the present year, Mr Donald McKenzie, owner of Lakefield station, was hacked to pieces while working in his garden. They mutilated his body with garden hoes and spears, and threw it into the lagoon opposite his house, about 100 yards away. They ransacked the place, taking rations, firearms, ammunition, clothing, &c. This was the second attempt that had been made upon McKenzie by the same tribe. In 1882 Mr McKenzie's well-known efforts in the civilising of that tribe, have been the topic of conversation all over the Cook district for years. He was a great believer in Mr Meston's feeding schemes, and I think Mr Meston would have trouble pointing out where the provocation comes in here.

I have here given a few of the outrages committed by the blacks, and I defy Mr Meston to prove from one individual case his sweeping assertion that the attacks of the blacks are mostly the result of provocation. I call upon him to produce evidence of one individual instance where provocation preceded their attack. And yet Mr Meston knows that one swallow does not make a summer. I have read over my cursory criticism of Mr Meston's official report to Mr Locke Kennedy and Mr P. J. Fox, both of whom are prepared to assist me in substantiating every statement I have made, and I have no doubt that the other three settlers in the Peninsula (Messrs Massey, Nott, and Jardine), had the opportunity of consulting them, would do likewise.<sup>173</sup>

The Commissioner of Police forwarded the police report of 1896 to the Home Secretary and advised:

Early in the year, I visited the South-Western districts, but the principal tour undertaken was my visit to the Cape York Peninsula for the purpose of inquiring into the efficiency of the Native Police, their relations with the Aborigines, and the condition of the Aborigines in that part of the colony. This necessitated altogether a journey of some 4,500 and an absence from Brisbane of two months. My Special Report to you, dated 19 February 1897, has, however, fully dealt with the subject.

#### **NORTH QUEENSLAND ABORIGINES AND NATIVE POLICE. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS.**

Mr W E Parry-Okeden, Commissioner of Police submitted his report on 19 February 1897, on the Aborigines of North Queensland and on the detachments of native police stationed in that part of the colony. Recommendations — Mr Okeden says:

I have come to certain conclusions concerning the general condition of the aborigines in the North and shall make recommendations for the amelioration of their condition, which will involve not only the maintenance of the native police but the strengthening of several of the detachments. This

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<sup>173</sup> Queenslander 9 January 1897 p 72, abridged; Queenslander 20 February 1897 p 414.

statement I know (though I hasten to add that I entirely condemn the native police system, as I found it working, as unsuitable to present conditions, and that I propose a complete change) commits me to a policy diametrically opposed to the very first recommendation made in the special commissioner's report as essential for the attainment of the end we both have in view namely, the bettering of the blacks. But though I condemn the native police system, as at present working, and because it is unfortunately, true that grave wrongs have occasionally been done in the past, it is not for a moment to be inferred that I in any way join in the wholesale implications against the force, that I know are not justified. The native police have had in the past a most difficult duty, and their officers have borne a heavy burden of responsibility. In the carrying out of that duty under most adverse conditions, many of them lost their lives, some have been severely wounded, and others have spent a lifetime of hardship in protecting life and property and in honestly carrying out on the very outskirts of civilisation the responsible work thrust upon them. Let the outside squatter, the pioneer, and the prospector, whose evidence is of value, testify.

Among the best, most valued, and trusted officers and sub-officers now serving under me, are many who spent long years in the native police, with credit to themselves and the force; and I should require clear, or at least strong circumstantial proofs of improper conduct on the part of any of these men before my confidence could be shaken as to deter me from recommending or detailing anyone for service in any branch of the police force. The first desideratum in any scheme for bettering the blacks is to establish friendly relations between those who are wild and uncivilised and the whites, thus begetting mutual confidence and trust, and the wild or "Myall" aborigines are naturally trusting, though, among their other characteristics, they are impulsive, fickle, cunning, and very treacherous. This last I say without hesitation, notwithstanding that this belief in their treachery has been asserted to be a "mischievous delusion". Instance after instance of the blackest treachery could be given, though, I grant, isolated instances of the most touching fidelity and even noble forbearance has occurred among them: still as a race, like nearly all savages, they are most vilely treacherous. Friendly relations can only be established by affording equal protection and dealing out even-handed justice to both races. In working this out I hold there is no such potent factor ready to hand, or indeed anywhere else, as native troopers properly officered, controlled, and worked. They are capable of being trained to a high state of discipline. In this condition, they display great courage and will follow a good leader to the death, and implicitly obey his order to shoot down whites or blacks. But, by reason of their very light-hearted, genial nature, they will, with much greater relish and celerity, join in a friendly "yabba," hunt, or corroboree with, or help to feed their fellows. The whole question of working native troopers, for good or bad, is a matter of leadership, control, and discipline. To condemn the native police as unfit to be brought into contact in any way with their fellows, because in the past under some cruel, cowardly, or inefficient officer, they have done wrong, is as absurd as it would be to wilfully smash your best rifle on the eve of a rifle-shooting contest because in the past it had fallen into the hands of a fool, madman, or murderer, who had worked harm with it.

It is a well-known fact that the only control possible to be obtained at the outset and maintained over wild or uncivilised blacks is by the exercise and exhibition of superior force by people whom they recognise as capable of competing with them in their tactics, tracking, bush cunning, lore or living, and by whom, in the fastnesses of their native mountains, scrubs, or mangrove swamps they know they can be followed and found when "wanted." The only white men in the police at the present time at all capable of undertaking, even in a very modified degree, such work, are those few who have gained experience by service in the native police, and by association with the native troopers, and observation of their methods and tactics. For bush craft there is only one teacher—Nature—and only one school—the bush itself—so that if all the qualified men now in the police are to be held ineligible for the work, and native police are to be wholly abolished, and white police, accompanied by a single unarmed tracker, to be substituted for them it will be necessary to establish, at great expense, a corps of young, strong, expert bushmen and riders, inured to the climate of Northern Queensland, and well acquainted with the habits, customs, general characteristics, countries, and above all the dialects of the various groups of blacks to be dealt with. To find even a few such men it would be necessary to recruit from the stations in the far North that is, from a place and from a class where and among whom at the present time are to be found, masquerading under white and yellow skins, some of the blackest scoundrels alive—wretches who have wrought deeds of appalling wickedness and cruelty, and who think it equal good fun to shoot a nigger at sight or to ravish a gin. So long as such villains escape hanging and live in our country, the blacks must be—

and shall be, if I have a free hand and my native police—protected. So long as bushmen, pioneers, prospectors of our race require protection, or lost persons and criminals, white or black, are to be tracked in the wilds of the bush, and so long as we have wild, uncivilised blacks to control, punish, or in any way look after, deal with, or even feed in their native haunts, I consider strong native police detachments a necessity. An isolated tracker here and there at stations far apart, with a few white policemen, who would, because of the climate, fever, &c., have to be continually changed, and who would from the same causes and the nature of their work be prohibited from family life, would be worse than useless; and I regard the idea as wholly impracticable and unadapted to prevailing circumstances.

Occasional distribution of tobacco, &c., would make police visits welcome, and incline the blacks to heed the good advice, which should be constant, not to molest the whites or their belongings, while prompt arrest and punishment should follow the commission of depredations. The blacks hunt consistently, are always on the move, and only native police can find them at all times. As the native police has been lately working, it has apparently confined its operations to retaliatory action after the occurrence of outrages, and seems to have dropped all idea of employing merely deterrent or conciliatory methods; but I intend to change all that. It is the craving for animal food that urges the blacks to kill cattle, and I think that in many instances they are not conscious of interfering with property not belonging to them but regard cattle roaming in the bush as food natural, and as such their lawful prey, and in many instances, there is much contributory neglect of their stock on the part of the owners. The facilities thus afforded for gratifying their carnivorous instincts has had considerable effect in lessening the prevalence of cannibalism.

I also attach a return showing the present strength and cost of the Native Police, and an estimate of the cost of maintenance of the reorganised force which I propose, with your sanction, to establish; also, a map I have had prepared showing proposed reserves and approximately the distribution of black population and the areas inhabited by the various groups, the names of which I have been personally unable to check. I do not pretend that this report is by any means thoroughly exhaustive — the subject is a large one, and my time and opportunities for recent and thorough inquiry have been very limited but I can see no reason to apprehend that further investigation would affect the principles of my recommendations, though it might occasion some modification or elaboration of details, which is my reason for reserving exact particulars as to localities, personnel, and so on, until further information enables me to present them to you in an accurate and final form. But I stand by the principles, and if they are adopted, and put into practice on a sufficient financial footing, I expect to see police camps and mission stations become in the near future nuclei of peaceful aboriginal settlement.

Return showing the Strength and Distribution of the Six Existing Native Police Detachments for One Year, from 1 July 1895 to 30 June 1896.

| Detachment      | Constables | Trackers | Horses |
|-----------------|------------|----------|--------|
| Coen            | 1          | 6        | 18     |
| Eight-mile      | 2          | 5        | 14     |
| Highbury        | 2          | 11       | 31     |
| Mein (Clayhole) | 2          | 5        | 19     |
| Musgrave        | 1          | 5        | 17     |
| Nigger Creek    | 2          | 5        | 12     |
| Totals          | 10         | 37       | 111    |

## MEASURES RECENTLY ADOPTED FOR THE AMELIORATION OF THE ABORIGINES.

Horace Tozer, Home Secretary, 25 November 1897:

The native police system originated in Victoria in 1842; a sum of £2,675 for their expenses first appearing on the Port Philip Estimates for 1843. The first detachment on Queensland territory came over from New South Wales to the Condamine in 1848. These police were therefore engaged here eleven years before Separation. They appear on the first Queensland Estimates, where a sum of £10,216 is granted to cover the cost of three lieutenants, eleven second lieutenants, nine camp sergeants and 120 troopers. Thence onward to the present year, a Native Police Force has been kept

up in Queensland, provision being made in the Estimates 1897-8 for 110 native troopers. Of these, 68 are employed as "trackers" in conjunction with the white police. There are only 42 at present worked together in detachments, doing purely native police work, and these are all stationed in the Cape York Peninsula. The native police have, as a force, been protective always. That it has at times been severely retaliatory has laid it open to the charge of having been unduly aggressive, and highly imaginative persons, without knowledge or practical experience, have frequently conjured up visions of wholesale murderous slaughter on the part of the native police merely for the purposes of contrast with unreasoning humanitarianism. The Commissioner of Police during an inspection tour last year in the Peninsula was dissatisfied with the native police system as he found it working, and it has undergone a complete reconstruction, with already highly satisfactory results. The native police in each district where their services are considered desirable are carefully instructed to protect the blacks from all forms of injustice by lawless whites, to warn them in an earnest and friendly manner against committing any offences on the settlers, and in case of an outrage by Aboriginals to take special care to capture or punish only those who are directly responsible. The white officers in charge of native police have received imperative orders to see that this pacific and conciliatory policy is faithfully administered. They are also entrusted with the distribution of food and tobacco to the Aboriginals as a satisfactory guarantee of genuine friendliness. The effect is already pleasantly conspicuous in the change among the Aboriginals throughout the Cape York Peninsula. The plan of feeding the blacks, along with a general policy of kindness and forbearance, has done wonders in a brief period to inaugurate a reign of peace and terminate hostility between the two races. The working of this system will be materially facilitated by each party of native police, including at least one man belonging to, and speaking the dialect of the neighbouring tribes. While the Commissioner of Police is initiating this principle of protecting and improving the condition of the tribes in the more unsettled parts of the North, the system of reserves is being established to provide for the scattered remnants of the blacks in the older and settled districts of the South.<sup>174</sup>

**AN ACT TO MAKE PROVISION FOR THE BETTER PROTECTION AND CARE OF THE ABORIGINAL AND HALF-CASTE INHABITANTS OF THE COLONY, AND TO MAKE MORE EFFECTUAL PROVISION FOR RESTRICTING THE SALE AND DISTRIBUTION OF OPIUM.<sup>175</sup>**

The Act was assented to on 15 December 1897:

Whereas it is desirable to make provision for the better protection and care of the Aboriginal and half-caste inhabitants of the Colony: And whereas great and widespread injury is being caused to the Aboriginal and half-caste and certain other inhabitants of the Colony by the consumption of opium: And whereas the restrictions heretofore imposed by law upon the sale and distribution of opium are found to be insufficient, and it is expedient to make more effectual provision for restricting such sale and distribution, and for preventing the evils arising therefrom: Be it therefore enacted by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly of Queensland in Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows.

This act was intended to secure the wellbeing of the fast-disappearing Aboriginals of Queensland. It combined a general and a specific object; the first, to make provision for the better protection and care of the Aboriginal and half-caste inhabitants of the colony; and the second, to make more effectual provision for restricting the sale and distribution of opium. The opium provision was emphatic testimony to the injury wrought among the blacks by the opium habit, and it was remarkable that in the opposition since made to the Act, these anti-opium provisions found no ostensible objection. The provisions relating to the sale of opium were of a very far-reaching and drastic nature, and their enforcement entailed a certain amount of hardship; however, unless

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<sup>174</sup> Tozer Qld V & P Vol. II p 43. See also, Telegraph 18 December 1897 p 4.

<sup>175</sup> Supplement to the Queensland Government Gazette, 16 December 1897, No. 149 p 1387. 61<sup>o</sup> Vict. No. 17.

the greatest possible obstacles were placed in the way of procuring opium, it would be impossible to prevent the drug reaching the hands of the blacks, so long as those blacks who were addicted to the use of opium could obtain it, but little could be done to ameliorate their condition.<sup>176</sup> Be that as it may, the outcry raised against the Act was of quite a different origin. It arose from the provisions requiring the removal of blacks to reserves set apart for them, where the white man may not enter, and exempting only such blacks (or half-castes) as shall be employed under permit from the Protector of the district. These provisions were resented by the employers of black labour, and so misrepresented to the race they were meant to protect as to take on the aspect of a new tyranny. And indeed, believed it was conceivable enough that an indiscreet protector or inspector might work them to the needless injury both of black and white.

On 4 July 1897, Inspector Lamond, Cooktown reported to the Commissioner regarding the blacks at Musgrave.

By appointment arranged by Sergeant Whiteford, Musgrave Station, I met 120 blacks and 30 gins on 25 May 1897 at the 5 Mile Creek near Musgrave and there killed a bullock for them. When I arrived at the 5 Mile with the Sergeant and 5 troopers, I could see only a very few blacks and afraid the meeting was to be a failure. When the bullock was shot a few more appeared and on my expressing disappointment at the small number present a peculiar call was given when every tree and other hiding place produced its man while the creek nearby appeared to be literally alive with blacks. It was like the scene created by Roderick Dhu's signal in the Lady of the Lake. While a few were cutting up the bullock, we with difficulty got them into line for the purpose of giving each a little tobacco and also counting them. The numbers were as stated and were principally composed of members of the Ral Mal and Koo Koo Lama Lama tribes. There being about equal numbers of each tribe. Those present explained there were many more, close by, who were too frightened to come up, there were no young boys or young gins present and am convinced there must have been quite 400 blacks in the neighbourhood and from the fires I saw the day previously I know there were great bodies of blacks going to our meeting place. They were mostly, all very timid and did not trust us as was shewn by the absence of their young gins and boys, neither did they like being put into line, fearing some trap, the least mistake in our arrangements would have had a bad effect. With the aid of half-civilised boys, I explained what you and the Government wished done. We all parted with expressions of good will, not a trace of the bullock being left. I told them I hoped to get blankets for them which have since been distributed amongst them. I have also applied to you for Brass Plates for the 2 principal men of these two tribes. Gnarwin the chief of the Koo Koo Lama Lama's was brave in coming off his own country to meet me. When I was getting and putting his name in my pocket book his voice, great thighs and hairy chest were quaking with timidity, the experience was apparently so novel to him that he did not know what might happen, not knowing whether the whole thing was a trap and my pencil and book something deadly. They appeared to be nearly all most healthy; one had a large sore on his cheek, something like cancer, another appeared to have had bad eyes from his birth, all the rest were clean skinned healthy-looking fellows. Many of the Ral Mals and other blacks could, I believe, be induced to accept work on plantations etc. Some were pleased at the prospect of becoming native troopers and I think good work could be done by arranging to send as many as are willing to go to sheep and cattle stations and also recruiting from them for the native police trackers for use in Southern Queensland and other colonies. There are very large numbers of blacks in that district; probably thousands. These 120 blackfellows were a very powerful imposing force, many being over 6 feet high but fortunately for us, they did not know their own strength.<sup>177</sup>

The Commissioner of Police forwarded the police report of 1897 to the Home Secretary and advised:

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<sup>176</sup> Qld Parl. 1898 V & P Vol. IV p 499.

<sup>177</sup> QSA ITM17980 DR58319, p 49.

A large share of the administration of *The Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act, 1897*, is done through the Police Department. I shall shortly forward an Interim Report on the operations under it in the Northern division of the colony, which I trust will be considered as showing satisfactory results.

Instructions given to Sub-Inspector R Garraway on appointment to Highbury native police camp, January 1898:

Interview as many blacks on the Palmer and other rivers as possible and establish friendly relations with all blacks in your district. Try to get station holders to work with you and get the blacks to return to their old hunting grounds. Every station would then have its own blacks. See that the monthly allowance is expended to best advantage. Every effort is to be made to protect both white and black, see Opium Act and if necessary, the Maytown police will take action against Chinese in the Palmerville district. Keep me fully advised of all you do.<sup>178</sup>

## PROTECTION OF ABORIGINALS.

Sir Horace Tozer, Home Secretary, made the following arrangements under *The Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act, 1897*. He constituted every petty sessions district in the colony, a district for the purpose of the Act. In the way of general supervision, the whole of the districts of the colony were to be in charge of the Commissioner of Police. In this, the Commissioner must be regarded as the supreme protector of Aboriginals in the colony. For the purposes of administration, the colony was divided into two parts.<sup>179</sup>

On 4 January 1898, Archibald Meston was appointed a protector of the Southern Division. On the same date, Walter Edmund Roth, M.R.C.S. Eng., L.R.C.P. Lond., was appointed a protector of the Northern and Central Divisions of the colony.<sup>180</sup>

On 14 January 1898, the Commissioner notified Roth he was under the direction of the Police Commissioner and outlined his preliminary instructions. As a Doctor of Medicine, Parry-Okenden hoped that he would not only devote his skill to the wellbeing of Aboriginals but he would be available for government work and for the benefit of the police, their wives and children where they were able to secure his services. Accordingly, he was to requisition the department for such medicine and instruments as necessary to carry out ambulance instruction to the police, anthropometry, and photography. As soon as he was fitted out, he was to proceed to Cooktown and make all possible inquiry concerning local Aboriginals as to numbers, diseases, conditions, measurements, photography, etc., also gather information on their territories and boundaries, and neighbouring tribes. At a later stage, he was to go inland and visit Telegraph, Native Police and other stations. He was to consult with Inspector Lamond of Cooktown. If he needed the services of the Native Police, he was to arrange with the inspector.<sup>181</sup>

## REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE ON THE WORKING OF THE ABORIGINAL PROTECTION AND RESTRICTION OF THE SALE OF OPIUM ACT, 1897.

W E Parry-Okeden reported on 27 September 1898 as follows:

Visits were also made to various other localities—among them Normanton and Thursday Island. At the latter place, much good is being achieved, with the cordial cooperation of John Douglas and

<sup>178</sup> QSA ITM564673. Image 1822, 1831, 1836

<sup>179</sup> Brisbane Courier 6 January 1898 p 4.

<sup>180</sup> GG VOL. LXIX.] 8 January 1898 [No. 7 p 66.

<sup>181</sup> QSA ITM17980 DR58321, 7553/1899 p 175.

the shipping master, and by the harmonious working of The Native Labourers' Protection Act of 1884 with the Aboriginals Protection Act. Except those working about the island, most of the natives are employed on vessels engaged in the pearlshelling or bêche-de-mer trade. Dr Roth, on 6 May, writes:

I visited Thursday Island and consulted with the Government Resident and the shipping master, Mr Bennett. The sergeant of police, McCreery, was too ill in bed for a prolonged conversation. No women, or children under puberty, are allowed to be shipped, although there is every reason for believing that the women are picked up again on the sandbanks from some thirty to fifty miles down the eastern coast of the peninsula. Bennett is keeping a sharp lookout for such offending employers, but until we can get a smart patrol steamer these gentry cannot be brought to justice. The Government Resident will also, in view of your telegram of 26 January, refuse permits for any Aboriginals to be shipped on articles trading to New Guinea or outside Queensland waters. Furthermore, both in the opinion of the Government Resident and the shipping master, the island natives (i.e., those beyond Prince of Wales and Horn Islands) can understand English, are well able to take care of themselves, and do not require protective legislation—a fact which I was very pleased to learn, as my work will be only too fully occupied in dealing with the abuses to which the mainland natives are exposed. All Aboriginals employed on the boats have, of course, to be on articles. It would appear that just lately at Thursday Island there has been quite a revival in pearlshell surface diving, and it is probable that even more blacks than those already employed (about 300) will be required. At present they are being recruited principally from the western coast of Cape York Peninsula, along that tract of country known as the 'Seven Rivers'—i.e., the coast district between the Jardine River and the Batavia. At the various police stations in the Peninsula, the police have been doing everything possible to encourage and protect the blacks in following their natural pursuits, and a feeling of mutual goodwill is being established.

Appendix A  
Cooktown, 1 July 1898.

Sir, I report to you on the working of the above Act during the past six months, that its provisions have been carried out with as little friction as possible that the proper employment of Aboriginals has been encouraged, and that particular attention has been directed to the discovery and suppression of existing abuses. In the Cook district, upwards of 1,100 permits have been granted and sixty refused; at Thursday Island six aliens were permitted to ship Aboriginals, two aliens being refused. I am pleased to state that the Hon John Douglas at Thursday Island reports, with regard to this act that "everything is working smoothly". Inspector Marrett at Cooktown speaks in the same strain, and Sub-Inspector Cooper at Cairns states that "the Act is working well without friction," and Inspector Graham at Normanton reports in similar terms. For reasons of which you cannot be unaware, all women, and, in the main, children under puberty, have been refused permission to be shipped on the pearlshelling and bêche-de-mer boats. W E Roth.<sup>182</sup>

The Commissioner of Police forwarded the police report of 1898 to the Home Secretary and advised:

There were also employed 121 Trackers of whom 35 were working as Native Police Detachments in District (Cook) and 4 at Turn-off Lagoon in District (Burke).

The work of the police among the aborigines of the colony under the provisions of *The Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act, 1897*, will form the subject of a separate report. The operation of the *Opium* clauses resulted in a large number of convictions, mostly against Chinamen; as a consequence of which the supplying of opium to the blacks has been largely diminished.

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<sup>182</sup> Qld Parl. 1898 V & P Vol. IV p 499ff.

## POLICE COMMISSION — THE COMMISSIONER EXAMINED.

On 20 July 1899, the Executive Council established a Royal Commission to inquire into the working of the Police Department. The Commissioner said native police were still employed. On the present principle they were useful, and the system was working satisfactorily.<sup>183</sup> Extracts from report:

1596. How about the native police? At the present time, I have only one native police officer.  
1597. Who is that? Garraway.

1598. Where is he? I am going to make some alterations as a result of my recent trip, but at the present time, he is at a Palmer camp. I shall only have one camp.

1599. You think alterations are necessary? I reorganised the whole of the working of the Native Police Force in connection with Aboriginal matters, and I have just made a tour through the Peninsula for the purpose of seeing for myself what is necessary, and I intend to make certain changes which will save a good deal. I have not yet reported on the matter to the Minister. I have a scheme in my head on the subject, and I shall have the centre at the Coen.

2122. By Mr Dickson: What kind of quarters have the native police got? They have such huts as they can build for themselves, with iron roofs, and they are very comfortable in them.

2123. By the Chairman: In fact, they provide their own buildings? Yes. At the Coen, they have a very good slab hut partitioned into rooms for each man and his family. They are provided with blankets and medicines and everything of that sort.

2124. Are the gins allowed to live in the camps? Yes, each gin lives with her man.

2125. They do not live promiscuously? No; they all live separately in their own huts.

2648. The following is a return of native police camps:

Native Police Camps — 30 June 1899.

| Place           | In Charge                              | Troopers |
|-----------------|--|----------|
| Coen            | Acting Sergeant C Bateman              | 10       |
| Eight-mile      | Constable J M Kenny                    | 5        |
| Musgrave        | Sergeant J Whiteford                   | 6        |
| Nigger Creek    | First-class Constable J Heenan         | 4        |
| Palmer          | Third-class Sub-Inspector R W Garraway | 10       |
| Turn-off Lagoon | Acting Sergeant E H Alford             | 6        |

The system for rationing native troopers where there are native police camps is as follows:

Meat rations are purchased locally, 2 lb. per diem per trooper. Half rations are allowed to gins, and quarter rations to picaninnies. The dry rations consist of flour, sugar, salt, tea, soap, tobacco, carbonate of soda, and cream of tartar for all the principal camps in the Cape York Peninsula.

The Police Commission reported on 29 November 1899. It made no findings or recommendations about the Native Police. In the course of the inquiry, complaints were made by certain sergeants of police that R W Garraway, who was a constable, had been promoted ahead of them to the rank of sub-inspector. On this matter, the Commission found:

We are satisfied with the Commissioner's assurance that the sub-inspector's appointment will not take effect as against members of the general force in reference to promotion, but that the sub-inspector will be restricted entirely to the duties of an officer of native police.<sup>184</sup>

The Commissioner of Police forwarded the police report of 1899 to the Home Secretary and advised:

The Native Police employed numbered 135, as follows:

<sup>183</sup> Brisbane Courier 15 August 1899 p 7; 17 August 1899 p 2; Brisbane Courier 4 November 1899 p 5.

<sup>184</sup> Brisbane Courier 2 December 1899 p 10.

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Native Police Detachments in "F" District (Cook)           | 34  |
| Native Police Detachment in "G" District at Turn-of Lagoon |     |
| in the extreme North-west of the colony                    | 6   |
| Distributed as Trackers at various stations                | 95  |
| Total  | 135 |

## REPORT OF THE NORTHERN PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINALS FOR 1899.

On 1 July 1900, Dr Roth the Northern Protector presented his 1899 report. He noted that Mr W E Parry-Okeden, Commissioner of Police had relinquished his supervision and the administration of the Act in the Northern districts devolved upon the Northern Protector of Aboriginals, acting directly under the instructions of the Minister.

For the year ended 30 June 1900, 1126 permits and agreements were registered. In the Coen and surrounding districts, however, there were many Aboriginals, and even employers, who do not care for the restrictions of an agreement. The matter is now largely left to the tact of the local protectors, and efforts are made to put down abuses only, not to hamper the legitimate employment of Aboriginals. Dr Roth is averse to any Chinese or other coloured aliens employing Aboriginals; but on the other hand, he could not conscientiously, for racial reasons only, refuse any such respectable and law-abiding citizen the right to work them. It had been found that six months' agreements worked better than twelve months' agreements, as the Aboriginal was able to do his annual "walk-about," from which he returned contented. It found that some employers of Aboriginal labour had made no money payment whatever. Therefore, a minimum wage was advocated. Relief was distributed from certain centres provided by the Government, but care is taken that the cases dealt with are deserving. In a few cases, relief in some form or another may be supplied for conciliatory and other purposes, thus: £1 per month has been allowed to the Cooktown Eight-mile Native Police and Bloomfield patrols for the purchase of beads and tobacco. So, again, during the past month the local police have been looking after the interests of the blacks in the neighbourhood of Cooktown—the same aborigines who, for reasons stated elsewhere, it has been recently deemed advisable to permanently keep out of the township.

The telegraph officer at Moreton, Mr P S Lindeman, writes to me (7-5-00) as follows. Everything is progressing satisfactorily with the aborigines. The monthly bullock in the wet season, and flour in the dry months, is a great treat, and also tends towards establishing friendly relations between the different tribes. Some of the blacks who meet each other here and spend a friendly evening together, eating, singing, and smoking most amicably, would have fought and eaten each other on sight a few years ago. Tomahawks and fishing-lines, supplied by Government, enable them to greatly increase their natural food supplies, and I think that the aborigines about here are in a much better condition to-day than they were even three years ago. At Macdonnell, the next telegraph station, another sixty miles further north, there are about 150 blacks, who keep fairly well to themselves, although the natives from both west and east coasts find their way there, and sometimes cause trouble. The nature of the country around being all desert, no large game is procurable, and fish is not obtainable in the vicinity. It thus happened that these blacks were often starved, and owing to the tribal disturbances, consequent on any breaches in the nature of trespass, &c., dared not go down to either coast. No wonder, then, that Mr M Haskett is now able to report on the "beneficial results" which have followed on the inauguration of a food-distributing centre here.

The advance of white settlement in the more outlying districts will gradually necessitate an increased expenditure for rations, a fact with the importance of which I am becoming more and more impressed. As each new block of country becomes taken up, the blacks are forcibly hunted from off their water supplies and hunting grounds both in it and in its immediate neighbourhood. According to their own laws of trespass, they are prevented from seeking fresh pastures, except at the cost of fighting; they have learnt by sad experience that the spearing of cattle is a risky matter; and they will thus, unless we allow them to starve, ultimately come to be a charge upon the State. Sub-Inspector Garraway, while warning the blacks about killing cattle on the Lower Palmer, &c., last year, was thus forced to promise them relief when they came in and asked for it.

I cannot, in the absence of any definite and regular returns of charges and convictions for the supply of opium to Aboriginals, draw any conclusions as to the probable increase or decrease of this infamous traffic.

The various protectors and others connected with the blacks are greatly handicapped by the freedom of intercourse, which is at present permissible between blacks and whites. A very large majority of abuses, which have been brought under review, are a direct consequence of this. No one other than an Aboriginal, police officer, or person authorised by a protector should be allowed within the precincts of a blacks' camp.

So far, I have had no opportunity of ascertaining whether the offences committed by Aboriginals are on the increase or decline. The Minister, however, has kindly given instructions to the effect that I am to be supplied with the necessary returns from the various police officers, and accordingly, in my next report, I trust to be able to furnish some interesting statistics. The absence of suitable interpreters, the unreliable nature of the Aboriginal evidence, and the heavy expense to the State, without adequate results, are facts which all militate against the present method of bringing such cases before the courts. A few years' imprisonment, with no anxiety for his food supply, is as nothing to the savage; so much so that during my last visit to the penal establishment at St. Helena, the officials informed me of cases where blacks, on expiry of their incarceration, were unwilling to leave. Their ultimate return is also fraught with danger on account of the imprisonment not being regarded by them in the light of any punishment, and I, therefore, shortly propose making arrangements whereby all such time-expired Aboriginal prisoners shall be effectually prevented from getting back to their native countries. Furthermore, the protection of the blacks must not be carried out at any risk to the safety of the Europeans, and accordingly, where the presence of any particular Aboriginal has proved a source of danger to the white population, his removal to, and detention in, another district has been, upon my recommendation, sanctioned by the Minister.

On 7 September 1900, Dr Roth wrote to the Under Secretary, Home Department that he protested against the reduction in the fines imposed on Chinese offenders for supplying opium to Aboriginals. On becoming Protector, he had received explicit instructions to stop this iniquitous traffic. The drug was a far more baneful influence on Aboriginals than liquor and venereal disease, and any relaxation in the punishment of offenders only tended to a speedier ruin and degradation of Aboriginals. Roth's protest to the Home Department appeared to have been based on a report he received from the Georgetown police. The report related to the number of Chinese convicted of supply opium to Aboriginals in the Georgetown sub-district from 1 June 1899 to 31 July 1900. The reported revealed that eleven Chinese were convicted and that in nine cases the fine was reduced from £20 to £5 and in one case the fine of £10 was reduced to £5.<sup>185</sup>

#### **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NORTHERN PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINALS FOR 1900.**

On 1 January 1901, Dr Roth the Northern Protector presented his 1900 report. Hitherto, it had been his practice to complete this report up to the end of 30 June. Nominally, therefore, this annual report deals with the past six months, to 31 December 1900.

In my last Report, I was adverse to any Chinese or other coloured aliens employing Aboriginals. Atherton forms a case in point. There are upwards of 230 Chinese employed by, or renting land from over seventy out of the seventy-six European selectors, with the result that the blacks are, necessarily, mostly employed by Asiatics. With regard to the length of service on the boats, the protectors at Cairns and Cooktown do not permit Aboriginals to be signed on articles for periods longer than six months, an arrangement similar to that at Thursday Island. Any longer continuous service is as a rule too much to be expected from the blacks. As the non-return of Aboriginals to their native country on expiry of their term of service constitutes a very grave abuse, I have impressed upon protectors the necessity for seeing that provision of the Act dealing with this subject is rigidly enforced.

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<sup>185</sup> QSA ITM17981 DR81522 pt 1, 00/14206, pp 87-91.

Several applications have been received from employers for the grant of certificates of exemption from the provisions of the Act (under Section 33) to certain half-castes. It is noteworthy that these have invariably been made on behalf of little girls. My interpretation of such certificates is that they should be issued only to those half-castes old enough mentally able to appreciate them.

I am satisfied that the blacks do not, as a rule, receive the wages—small enough as they are—which they are justly entitled to under their agreements. With the amending Act, the Home Secretary proposes, the Protectors will have power to cheek this and other abuses.

With regard to the grant of food and other relief, the Government does not for one moment intend feeding the whole native population in the North, which I estimate at not less than 25,000. Where at any given centre—and they were not a few—it was found that the relief supplied all the aborigines' wants, the fact came into prominence that such a distribution was only acting in the way of pauperisation, with the sure result that the government would be compelled to make the temporary relief a permanent charge. The old ones had no incentive to hunt for their native foods, while the young ones, as they got older, had no ambition or pressure brought upon them either to obtain it for themselves, or to seek employment among the settlers, who would willingly give them work. In my opinion it was, therefore, far preferable that the rations supplied by government should prove less sufficient than ample, and I have accordingly gradually decreased the allowance in those localities where there still remains an abundance of native foods. At one centre I found that sugar and tea, as well as beef and flour, were being regularly supplied, and so far as the first mentioned article was concerned, could quite understand that the able-bodied blacks had got too lazy to hunt for honey. Except, therefore, in cases coming under medical treatment, beef and flour are the only articles now allowed. While these reductions will thus prove of no hardship to the aborigines themselves, the settlers in certain districts will no longer have cause for the complaint that, owing to the issue of government relief, the blacks refuse to work for them.

Government relief has now been cancelled at Ayr, Cardwell, the Daintree, and at Bowen, where the local sergeant expressed himself of the opinion that it was simply a waste of money. In the Cairns district, large reductions have been made. On the other hand, for the relief of the aborigines—some 170 in number—excluded from Cooktown, £17 monthly has been specially provided.

There are a few' cases where, instead of, or in addition to, food, the blacks are given tobacco, tomahawks, &c., for purposes of conciliation and of friendship. I am convinced that if white settlement is allowed to advance further up into the Gulf Coast and Peninsula, without due provision being made for the blacks who are thereby dispossessed of their native hunting grounds and sources of water supply, the distribution of food relief will in a few years become a very heavy charge upon the State. I propose discussing this same matter later on.

At Cooktown, as a result of keeping the blacks out of the township, and refusing to allow any publicans to employ Aborigines, there has not been a single conviction during the past six months for drunkenness. Convictions have been recorded in other places. The supply of opium to Aborigines continues apparently with unabated vigour in spite of the vigilance of the authorities and the increasing severity of the fines inflicted. I look upon the opium-habit as a cancerous sore slowly but surely eating its way into the bosom of the community—a danger fatal alike to the black and to the white. I cannot close my thoughts to the belief that many Europeans will soon be succumbing to its influence.

The work of the protectors and others connected with them continues to be greatly hampered by the freedom of intercourse which is at present permissible between blacks and whites. Any unscrupulous European, Asiatic, &c., may enter and remain in any blacks' camp at will.

The Commissioner of Police forwarded the police report of 1900 to the Home Secretary and advised:

The native trackers employed numbered 127: Native Police detachments in F district (Cook), 34; Native Police detachment in G district, at Turn-off Lagoon, in the extreme North-west of the colony, 4; distributed as trackers at various stations, 89; total, 127.

On 30 July 1901, a Bill to secure greater protection of Aborigines was submitted by the Home Secretary for its second reading, which met with the general approval of the leader of the Labour

Party. Mr Browne was particularly pleased to note in the measure a recognition of the abuses in the pearlshelling industry through the ill-treatment of Aboriginals employed therein. Mr Maxwell was also favourably impressed with the measure. Mr W Hamilton referred to the press reports re the starving condition of the Western blacks as an exaggeration of the facts and considered that the £500 paid to the Georgina protector would have been sufficient to have kept the far Western blacks in good condition. Heavier penalties were required to check the sale of opium to the Aboriginals.<sup>186</sup>

*The Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act, 1901* was assented to by his Majesty and proclaimed on 3 May 1902. The principal amendments of the 1901 Act were:

- Recognisance on removal of aboriginal - 7.
- Penalties under the Act not to be mitigated – 8.
- No marriage of Aboriginals without approval – 9.
- The Native Labourers Protection Act of 1884* subject to the Act – 10.
- No females or children allowed on vessels without permit – 10.
- No employment outside Queensland waters – 10.
- Death of employed Aboriginal to be notified – 11.
- Minimum wages to be paid – 12.
- Protector to manage property of Aboriginals – 13.
- Burden of proof of age of consent on the accused – 14.
- Mining on reserves prohibited without permit – 15.
- Persons prohibited from camps – 16.
- Removal of camps from near townships – 17.
- Power of Protector to convene a court – 18.
- Father liable for the support of half-caste child – 19.<sup>187</sup>

These changes to the principal act of 1897 reflected Dr Roth's need to have greater supervisory powers over Aboriginals as he clearly outlined in his report of 1900 set out above: "In carrying out these duties-or trying to carry them out to the best of my ability-I have come across many abuses and many evils which I have not had the means to remedy, and I may say candidly that this Bill is in a large measure based upon the abuses I have found to be existing, and which I have had no power to redress."<sup>188</sup>

## **OUR ABORIGINAL POPULATION — VICE-REGAL INTEREST: VIEWS OF THE HOME SECRETARY.**

His Excellency having expressed a desire for further information, the Home Secretary wrote and delivered to him on 19 December 1901 the following letter:

I propose to make arrangements for the frequent patrolling of the region in question by the police stationed at Camooweal and Burketown, with a view to the more effectual establishment of cordial relations between the blacks and the pastoral lessees of that district. This can, I think, be accomplished without much difficulty by following closely upon the lines which have been adopted with much success at the isolated telegraph stations along the electric telegraph line which runs up through the Cape York Peninsula to Thursday Island. The practice there is to ENCOURAGE THE BLACKS to come into telegraph stations at stated periods, and to supply them, at no very great expense, with ample rations of beef, &c, and to present them occasionally with tomahawks, knives, and such other small articles of trade as are most appreciated by them, at the same time impressing them with the necessity for their abstention from interference with the stock of the pastoral lessees.

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<sup>186</sup> Worker 3 August 1901 p 10.

<sup>187</sup> Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of Sale of Opium Act 1901 (2 Edw VII, No. 1).

<sup>188</sup> Hansard LC, 8 October 1901 p1137.

They appear to take but a short time to fully apprehend the position, and to understand that the tangible benefits which they thus enjoy are contingent upon their good behaviour.

At one time, as you are aware, it was the practice to employ the Native Police principally in tracking down and punishing such blacks as were suspected of spearing cattle or of having committed other offences, while little or no attempt was made at conciliation. I am happy to be able to state that this has all been changed during recent years and that now, instead of regarding their countrymen of the Native Police Force as their natural enemies, the Aboriginals of the bush have come to look upon them as friends whose visits to their districts are, as a rule, looked forward to with pleasure. Care is taken to place in charge of the native troopers, sergeants of police who have an intimate knowledge of the Aboriginal race, and who are known to be humane and tactful.

#### PATROLLING.

It would be of much advantage if the police of the Northern Territory could patrol the other side of the border in the same way and in co-operation with our police, and in the event of this idea being favourably received by the authorities in Adelaide, I shall have much pleasure in giving directions to carry it into full effect, so far as it may be found possible to do so on this side. I am not personally familiar with the country in question, but I understand that some of it is, as your Excellency has said, somewhat wild and broken. It might, therefore, be found advisable to arrange for the police of the two States to act together on some of these patrolling journeys, and operate on both sides of the border in one body.<sup>189</sup>

The Commissioner of Police forwarded the police report of 1901 to the Home Secretary and advised:

The Native Trackers employed numbered as follows:

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Native Police Detachments in F District (Cook)            | 31  |
| Native Police Detachment in G District at Turn-off Lagoon |     |
| In the extreme North-west of Queensland                   | 3   |
| Distributed Trackers at various stations                  | 83  |
| Total   | 117 |

#### ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NORTHERN PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINALS FOR 1901.

Annual Report on the results of the operation of *The Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act, 1897*, for the year ending 31 December 1901.

A total of 1691 permits were issued by the local protectors. At Cooktown, the greater number, and at Thursday Island, all except one of the permits issued, were in connection with the employment of male Aboriginals on pearl-shell and bêche-de-mer fishing boats. A difficulty which has been brought into prominence in connection with the insistence upon agreements for all permanent Aboriginal labour is the Police Department continuing to employ trackers and their gins illegally, i.e., not under the provisions of the Act. The public are aware of this, and now and again employers have complained about my insisting on agreements when the police are apparently rendered exempt. As matters stand at present, the tracker on an average is paid something 13s. 6d. per month for his services, while his gin gets nothing, though, as far as my experience goes, she has to do all the domestic duties, washing, &c., of the police station. This 13s. 6d. comes out of the police vote, while the gins rations are paid for by the Aboriginals' Department—an arrangement I do not for one moment wish to cavil at. Furthermore, there is no control on the part of the protector over the removal or return of these trackers from or to their original homes: he cannot even prevent the tracker being separated from his gin. As a remedy for this state of things, I would suggest that agreements be insisted on, the tracker's monthly wage reduced to 10s, and his gin be paid at the rate of 5s (the minimum authorised by the new Amending Bill), the difference of 1s. 6d. coming, if necessary, out of the Aboriginal vote.

<sup>189</sup> Brisbane Courier 27 July 1901 p 13.

The expenditure connected with the grant of food and other relief shows a considerable reduction as compared with that of last year, and apparently there has been no diminution in the effective results. On certain stations, where applications have been received for the institution of government relief, I have advised that the wages of aborigines under agreement should be partly expended for the benefit of those of their relatives who are not so employed. In the more unsettled districts, tobacco, tomahawks, calico, etc., are occasionally supplied for purposes of conciliation and friendship. The grant of food relief has been cancelled at Butcher's Hill (Boggy Creek Reserve, Laura River), Mareeba, and Dent Island (Mackay), while a new centre has been established at Irvinebank. The relief at Cape Bedford—the largest amount—is expended in the shape of about four bags of flour and 5 lb. of tobacco amongst the eighty odd (North Shore) blacks who have thereby been kept out of Cooktown: the reserve on which they are located is so poor that it is only in October and November that they can possibly obtain even a fair living out of the native foods (yams and fish). Amongst special cases of distress which called for assistance during the year may be mentioned that of Burketown, where in March some thirty blacks were cut off from escape to higher ground by advancing floods: rations had to be conveyed to them by boat.

Opium continues to be supplied, but the minimum penalties laid down for supplying the drug under the new Amending Bill, together with the increased Commonwealth duty of 10s., making it now 30s. per lb., will perhaps tend to reduce the evil. With one exception—that of a European woman—all the convictions reported to me in the North have been secured against coloured aliens. This, however, does not for a moment mean that Europeans are not supplying it to as great, if not greater extent.

On 24 July 1902, H Meston wrote to the Under Secretary of the Home Department regarding the remuneration and conditions of service of native trackers. The original arrangements of providing a uniform, food, tobacco and 13/6 per month were no longer appropriate. A great number of Aboriginals with their wives had been sent out from the reserves to different stations in Queensland. They had gone out well dressed and in most cases with a few shillings in their pockets, and returned home poorly clad with no money and in broken health or diseased. The gin was made a house servant and did the scrubbing, washing and kitchen work. She complained of receiving no wages for services. The boys had to do all the work with the horses, clean saddles, bridles, bits, stirrup irons, swords, rifles, revolvers, and various other work. 13/6 per month or 3/- per week was not a fair wage. He suggested that a tracker's wage be raised to 7/6 per week, and if the boy's wife is employed by the police officer or police officer's wife, her wage be 2/6 per week with food and clothing. The suggestion seems to have been approved by the Home Department.<sup>190</sup>

On 24 September 1902, A Meston wrote to the Under Secretary, Home Department complaining of the Northern Protector sending too many men to his care at considerable expense and apparently without sufficient justification.

Leaving all previous cases aside, I would refer specially to Charley and Sandy, two sent down from Cooktown arriving here on 11 September 1902. Also, to another man named Sandy sent from Cooktown and arriving here on 18 August 1902. This last, Sandy was the black who threw the Singhalese Pereira overboard from the cutter *Lollyfish*. According to Sandy's statement, Pereira gave him great provocation, to afford a fair excuse for even a white man to have resorted to extreme measures. The Singhalese do not bear a very high character as a rule and Pereira was no exception. I sent Sandy to Durundur where he bears so far, an excellent character and I have no fear of his future. This man was sent down in charge of a special constable at a cost to the Department of about twenty pounds.

The Charley and Sandy who came on 11 September from Cooktown were sent in charge of a constable, handcuffed together for the whole voyage and were brought thus manacled to my office. There was no information whatever accompanying these men to anyone whomsoever. Charley was

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<sup>190</sup> QSA ITM17981 DR81524 Pt 3 p 20.

sent on Dr Roth's warrant and Sandy came without any apparent reason whatever, the constable merely having heard that he was said to be "incorrigible".

Charley was an ex-trooper and tracker who had done faithful and creditable service with the Police. His little son, a boy known as Toby, was reared by Mr Moran late Police Magistrate at Cunnamulla, baptised and educated. He is now in service with F C Cox the vigneron. An Aboriginal man took Charley's wife and started towards the Palmer River to the Cocowarra tribe to which she belonged. Charley followed, overtook them and speared the abductor as he was perfectly justified in doing according to tribal law. Even in civilised America, all juries treat such an act as "justifiable homicide". I certainly do not regard Charley as a criminal for an act of that kind. He had no other remedy.

Against Sandy, there is apparently no specific accusation at all, merely a vague charge of being incorrigible and there is no reference whatever to him in the warrant, so we have so far no information to justify his removal. And what is the actual character of these two men sent down from Cairns to my office handcuffed together as dangerous and desperate criminals? Sandy is an Aboriginal who is good or bad according to the treatment he receives. He and I understood each other in five minutes and I sent him to Durundur with perfect confidence in his future good behaviour.

The other "desperate criminal" Charley, chanced to belong to the same class as myself in the "Bora" ceremony, consequently we are class brothers, and with perfect confidence I sent him out to Charleville on the 16th in charge of Harold Meston's two horses which he fed carefully and handed over safely at the end of the journey. I also recommended him to Harold Meston as a trooper for himself, but he advises me that he sent him into service with Mr Chatterton, the Stock Inspector, and I have no fear of the result.

These then are the types of men sent down as "dangerous criminals" and handcuffed together for a thousand miles as if they were homicidal maniacs or convicted murderers in the first degree. It was a cruel wrong to these men and I am quite certain the Home Secretary would never knowingly sanction anything of the kind. I would also respectfully direct the Home Secretary's attention to northern Aboriginal prisoners and their relatives.

These questions directly affect myself as Southern Protector, men being sent to my division, to my care, and consequently it is necessary for me to advise the Home Secretary with regard to all surrounding circumstances. The Home Secretary will remember that on a visit to St Helena on July 15, he sanctioned the return to Burketown of two-time expired Aboriginal prisoners, George and Daylight, against my advice to send them to Durundur. It appears that Captain Pennefather was influenced in his return of these two blacks by the Northern Protector having promised their relatives that they would be sent back when their time expired.

It is necessary to remember that these two men were single, having no wives or children. They were sent back to Burketown at a cost of about twenty pounds. Why the solicitude for these two men and the total disregard of all the family ties in the case of others? Darkie was recommended to be sent from gaol to Fraser's Island, though he had a wife and child in the North. I sent him to Durundur with the Home Secretary's approval.

Sandy, who threw Pereira overboard, was sent to Brisbane leaving his wife and three children at Cooktown. Charley was sent away, leaving his wife and little girl in the Cooktown district. Larry, after serving his three years' sentence at St Helena was left for me to deal with and I sent him onto Durundur. He too has a wife and children in the North. There are other similar cases. And what need for the trouble and expense of sending such men as Charley and Sandy a thousand miles south when they could have been sent to Yarrabah for a mere trifle? Sandy came from the Coen and Charley from North of Cooktown, both localities a long way from Yarrabah and many hostile tribes intervening.

When the Aboriginal Darkie got away from Fraser's Island last year he walked north along the coast until he reached the Herbert River, but he would not risk running the gauntlet of the tribes between there and Cairns so he managed to get over the intervening distance on one of the small coasting steamers. Men from North of Cooktown would not be at all likely to start home along the coast from Yarrabah. There is no need for these northern blacks to be sent to southern reserves.

I certainly have never once thought of sending a southern black to a northern reserve, and I have had to deal with much more dangerous men than any of those sent down by the Northern Protector. I find by his report of this year that he has sent to Fraser's Island some Aboriginals of whom I, never heard before and of whom I have most certainly never been advised. I have no objection whatever

to the men whom the Northern Protector has sent down to my division as "criminals" and "desperate characters", as they have all proved so far to be a lot of very fine fellows and the Durundur Superintendent writes to say he "would be glad to take a few more men of the same stamp", but it seems to be my duty to advise the Home Secretary that it is both an expensive and needless proceeding besides an unjustifiably cruel act to the men who are sent a thousand miles away, presumably forever, from wives, children and relatives. Surely one of the five Northern Mission Stations is equal to taking care of an occasional Aboriginal, especially those whose alleged crimes are merely deeds done in accordance with their own laws, and there is no offence against the white race.

On a northern reserve, they could be accompanied by their wives and children. Last week, three more northern blacks were sent to my care and I learn that there are two more on the way down. The three are the ex-troopers supposed to be concerned in some recent trouble in the North and these men were sent down by the Commissioner of Police, doubtless for some special reason. I have not yet heard of the offences charged to the other two. In conclusion, I would respectfully advise that each Protector take care of his own criminals, and thus put an end to what may certainly be regarded as an entirely unnecessary expense.<sup>191</sup>

The Home Secretary, J Foxton noted on Meston's letter:

As the Aboriginals sent south from the north seem to turn out so well, there does not seem to be much to complain about. Mr Meston should bear in mind that in regard to the Keppel Island blacks, I followed his recommendation because they were within his jurisdiction and the responsibility rested with him. I, the same way, follow the recommendations of Dr Roth in reference to the disposal of northern blacks and any criticism of such action, on the part of another official is out of place just as any criticism by Dr Roth upon my action in connection with Keppel Island blacks would have been unwarranted as being made perhaps upon insufficient information. If it were complained by Mr Meston that these transferred men were unmanageable or a danger in the south, I could understand it but the reverse serves to be the case as Mr Meston is at some pains to show.<sup>192</sup>

On or about March 1905, Sub-Inspector Garraway sought a transfer from the Native Police to the general police. During the Royal Commission into the police in 1899, the then Commissioner advised that Garraway would be confined exclusively to native police duties, which the Royal Commissioners accepted.<sup>193</sup> However, the acting Commissioner of Police, A Douglas reviewed Garraway's application and observed "the duties now in connection with the blacks are very little and no serious crime has been reported for a long time." Douglas, therefore, recommended that Garraway be transferred to the General Police and placed in charge of the sub-district of Cook and that Sergeant Whiteford take over the Coen police station.<sup>194</sup>

On 20 December 1905, the Home Secretary's office gazetted the establishment of new police districts for the state. As a consequence, the Governor pursuant to the provisions of *The Police Act of 1863*, assigned, as from 1 January 1906, Third-class Sub-Inspector Roland Walter Garraway to Roma Street in the police district of Brisbane.<sup>195</sup> The absorption of Garraway into the general police brought to an end the Queensland native police. The remaining Aboriginals employed by the police department were not sworn constables and therefore could not be considered police in the legal sense of the word. Moreover, they were subject to the operation of *The Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Acts, 1897 to 1901* in that the department was required to obtain a permit to employ an Aboriginal, whether they were called a tracker or a trooper was irrelevant.

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<sup>191</sup> QSA ITM17981 Dr158953 Pt 7 p 36.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> See page 71 above.

<sup>194</sup> QSA ITM564673, Garraway, Ronald Walter,

<sup>195</sup> QPG 1908 p 497.

## Chapter 1 — Assessment

Set out in chapters 2 to 4 are the collisions between Queensland colonists and Aboriginals as colonists began to occupy the lands and waterways of the colony of Queensland. With the colony installing substantial municipal infrastructure and gaining a large population, the concept of settled districts and unsettled districts became a way of describing the nature or make-up of the colony.<sup>196</sup> Within the unsettled districts of the colony were the frontiers of expansion: pastoral, mining, agriculture, and timber getting. On these frontiers, settlers took up their chosen enterprise to make a living in this new country. The principal characteristic of this entry into the unsettled areas was the occupation by the settler of a specific area of land, be it 40,000 square miles or one acre, to the exclusion of all others. No matter how big or how small the individual's operation was, he was the sole occupier and operator, his own master. In good open or lightly timbered country, well adapted for grazing purposes, went the pastoralist with his herds of cattle, sheep and horses. In the rich scrub forest and open lands suitable for cultivation went the free selector to cultivate his crops. In the nooks and crannies, in the gullies and creeks, and on the ridges above the rivers went the fossickers, prospectors, tin scratchers and sundry diggers. On the maritime frontier were the coastal traders, the pearlshellers and the bêche-de-mer fishers.

All of these settlers went with the approval of the Queensland government because each of them required a licence, a permit, or some legal authority to occupy their landholding and to carry on their chosen activity. Although the country was considered unsettled, the individual was subject to the laws of Queensland and under the control and regulation of the government. The unsettled districts were, therefore, not lawless frontiers. Although the frontiers had a semblance of peace and good order, these frontier lands and waterways contained an autochthonous people. The nature of these people is difficult to describe because of twenty-first-century social and cultural politics. However, based on the contemporary writings of the nineteenth century, they lived in small nomadic groups of hunter-gatherers within their clan boundaries. There was no local village economy with its headman and defined gardens or flocks to impress the colonist with indigenous stability and solidarity. They had no civil or municipal structure but I hasten to add, to avoid the wrath of the social justice warrior, that they had a social structure for inter-clan contact and personal relationships. Consequently, the settler, on entering an unsettled district, could not attend an indigenous village and present his credentials to settle or mine or fish to the village chief as there was no village or headman.<sup>197</sup> The first time a settler might become aware of the Aboriginals' presence would be on his return home after a hard day's work on his selection to find his dwelling ransacked and his livestock stolen or his gardens destroyed. This affront would come as a crippling shock and cause a significant setback to the settler in his efforts to establish himself. When the death of a settler occurred, the police were involved. On the erection of the colony of Queensland, there were two types of police, a Native Police force consisting of white officers and Aboriginal troopers for the unsettled districts and a white police force for the settled districts of the colony. Furthermore, to facilitate the policing of the colony, it was divided into police divisions, which were put under the charge of an inspector with appropriate levels of manpower, according to the demographics of each division. Those divisions located in the unsettled districts were then allocated native police units.

Before attempting to analyse the collected data, it is important to describe the type of settlers entering the unsettled districts. The ethnic background of most settlers was white, British subject from the United Kingdom; the next largest ethnic group were Chinese, almost exclusively single males, and the remaining too varied to mention. The economic background of most of these

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<sup>196</sup> *Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1868*, QGG 1868 p 173.

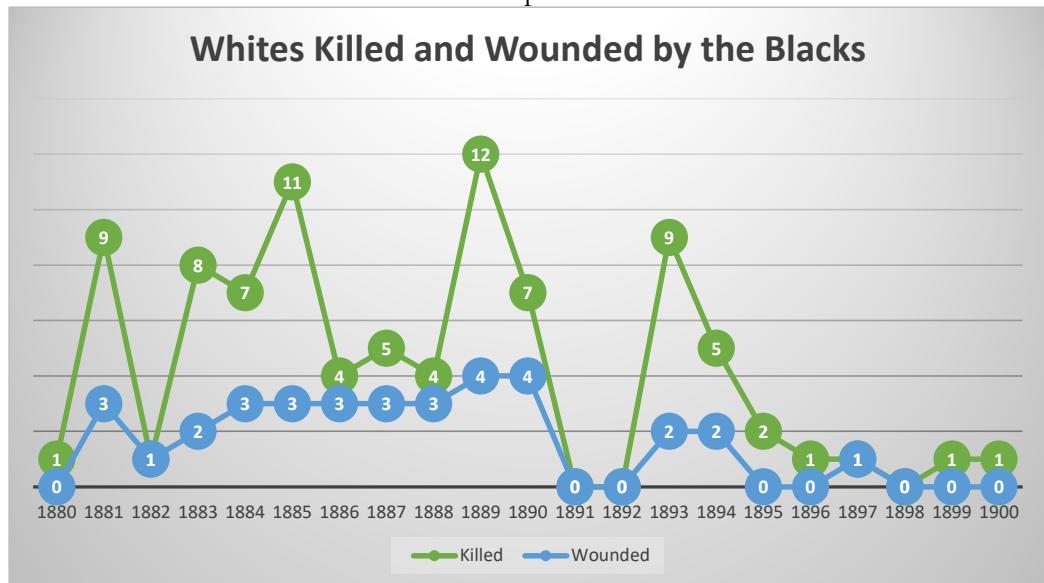
<sup>197</sup> A stateless society: There is no centralised power controlling a stateless society.

settlers was, particularly the miners and free selectors, self-funded colonists with little capital and a heavy reliance on their ability to prosper through hard work.

Where areas of the unsettled districts became disturbed through collisions between settlers and Aboriginals, native police camps were established. The primary role of the detachment of native police was to patrol the area to maintain the peace and good order of the district. In situations where the presence of the Aboriginals assumed a threatening attitude, which was considered unsafe for the settlers, the Aboriginals were moved on. A researcher wanting to write the history of the native police in any district may presume that there would be available the historical logbooks of native police patrols—no such luck.

To give the reader some idea of the level of social disruption within the unsettled areas of the colony, graph 1 illustrates the number of white settlers killed or wounded by Aboriginals. The data has been collected from the three principal unsettled areas of the colony namely, Cape York Peninsula, the lower peninsula area (Cairns hinterland) and the Gulf country.<sup>198</sup> There were, of course, unsettled areas in the western parts of the colony but they do not show the high levels of social disruption seen in the northern areas of the colony. This feature may be a result of Aboriginal population densities. The western parts of the colony were semi-arid, thus carrying lower densities of indigenes. The data revealed that in the period studied, 88 Europeans were killed and 35 were wounded, see graph 1.<sup>199</sup> As noted above, there were other ethnic groups in the unsettled districts, notably the Chinese, who were also killed and maimed by the Aboriginals. It is well-nigh impossible to determine the number of Chinese killed by Aboriginals. In graph 2, population densities are shown for the Palmer goldfield. The data suggest that the Chinese were present in large numbers compared to Europeans, from which it may be inferred that their casualty rates were significantly higher. When their deaths were brought to the notice of the authorities, an inquest was held to determine the cause of death and these records are available for study. Like the Europeans, the Chinese were on the very edge of colonial society and levels of awareness coupled with poor communications and their isolated social and working environments (mining work), all contributed to their deaths going unrecorded. The deaths of all races that have been recorded are highlighted in the source material and are included in the global mortality figures below.

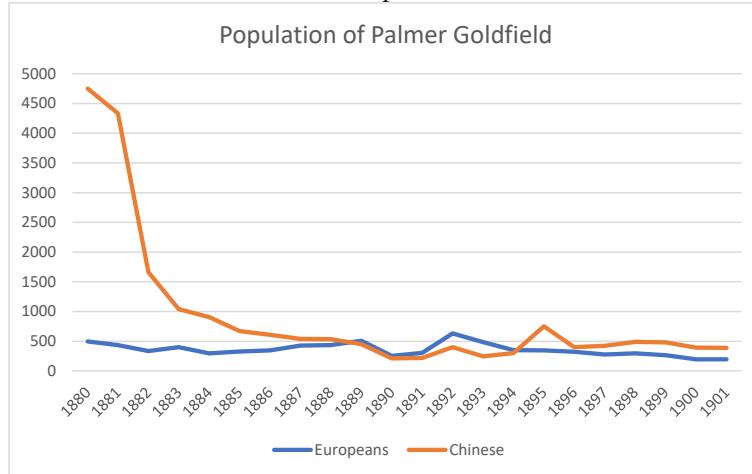
Graph 1



<sup>198</sup> Please refer to graphs which are based on Appendix A.

<sup>199</sup> See Appendix A and chapters 2 to 4 below.

Graph 2



The reader may wonder why the data is Anglocentric. The short answer is because the colony was British and the laws favoured British subjects, such as the *Elections Act* of 1885 which specifically stated that no aboriginal native of Australia, India, China, or of the South Sea Islands shall be entitled to be entered on the roll except in respect of a freehold qualification.<sup>200</sup> Without political representation, ethnic groups have little hope of government support or more importantly, funding to advance their needs. Furthermore, there is no primary source material by Aboriginals or the Chinese relating to their experiences on the frontiers of the unsettled districts.<sup>201</sup>

The Commissioner of Police in his 1880 annual report advised, in upbeat terms, that the efforts made to induce the natives of the northern districts to come to friendly terms were at length commencing to show satisfactory results and that he would be able to reduce the Native Police Force in these districts and replace them by ordinary police with trackers. However, in 1881, he observed that attempts to conciliate the aborigines in the Northern districts have continued, but have not come up to expectation. He also proposed stationing an ordinary constable in addition to the campkeeper at Native Police stations in the outside districts. During 1882, Eyre's Creek (Native Police), Glenroy Creek (Native Police), Fountainville, Burketown, and Geraldton police stations were established. Applications for police protection were received from Jundah, East Bundaberg, Isis Scrub, Nulla Nulla, Tully River, Normanby River, Mossman River, Argentine (Ravenswood), Return Creek (Herberton), Nicholson River, and Creen Creek; and good grounds existed for making the applications.

In 1883, the Commissioner reported it was not possible to remove some of the Native Police detachments from the coast districts. He went on to say, "The settlers expect too much from the Native Police, and neglect to take ordinary precautions for the safety of their stock and other property; sometimes leaving their selections for weeks and months without any person in charge, and then expressing great surprise at finding their huts plundered or their stock speared and scattered. Where settlement is fairly close, Native Police should not be required."

In his 1884 report, he conceded:

<sup>200</sup> 49° VICTORÆ, No. 13. Section 6 of the Act.

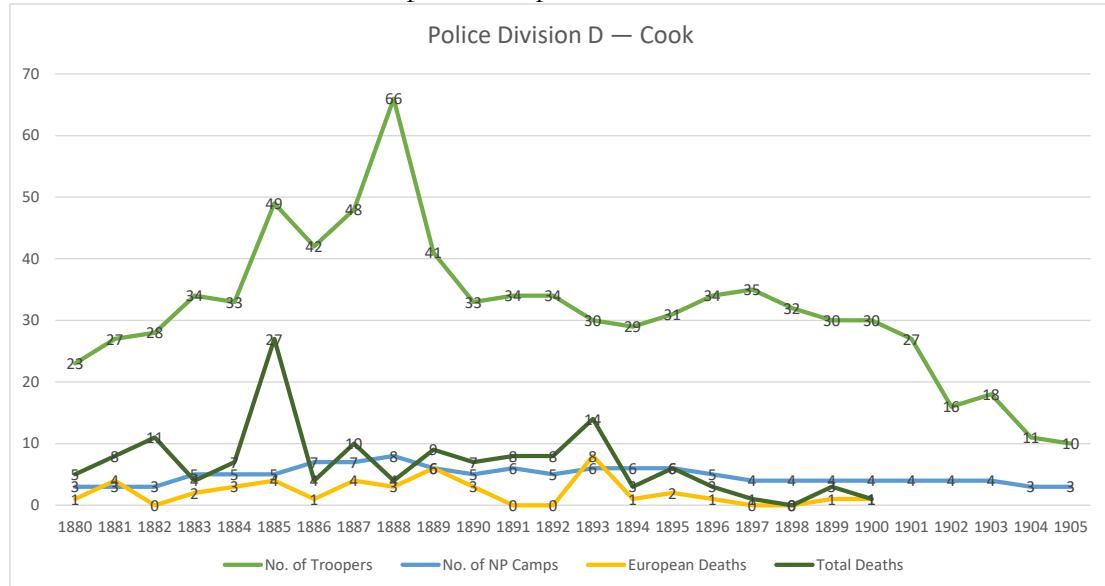
<sup>201</sup> Regarding Aboriginal source material, the Black Arm Brigade have worked overtime to construct an indigenous narrative using all sorts of pseudo scholarly devices, cross-reading European sources, oral history from mixed race informants, statistical projections from inadequate or misleading historical data, archaeology, etc & etc. Chinese: Catherine May, 'See Poy, Tom (1853–1926)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/see-poy-tom-8381/text14713>, published first in hardcopy 1988, accessed online 26 June 2024.

The condition of the blacks on the coast and in the interior of the Cook District has become a matter of some concern. Settlement has advanced upon the tribes so rapidly that they have lost their hunting grounds, and have therefore been deprived of their only means of existence. The consequence has been the committal of depredations regarding which many complaints have reached the Department. While the population was sparse, and large tracts of country were open to the aborigines, it was possible for the Police to keep them back from settlement; but, now, in driving them away from one occupied locality, they merely are driven to another, and they are prevented from obtaining their natural food. As settlement is increasing in the far northern districts daily; it will be necessary to consider what means will have to be adopted to protect the aborigines from starvation, and so end what is now a source of constant trouble between blacks and whites.

Then in 1889, the Commissioner wrote that the Native Police camps at the Barron River, Palmer River, McIvor River, Carl Creek, Norman River, and Dunrobin were broken up, and by reducing the number of trackers at other stations, 60 of the Native Police were dispensed with. In 1895, Commissioner Parry-Okeden observed that depredations by the blacks in the Cook and Burke districts were numerous. Then in 1898, he said 35 trackers were working as Native Police Detachments in F District (Cook) and 4 at Turn-off Lagoon in G District (Burke).

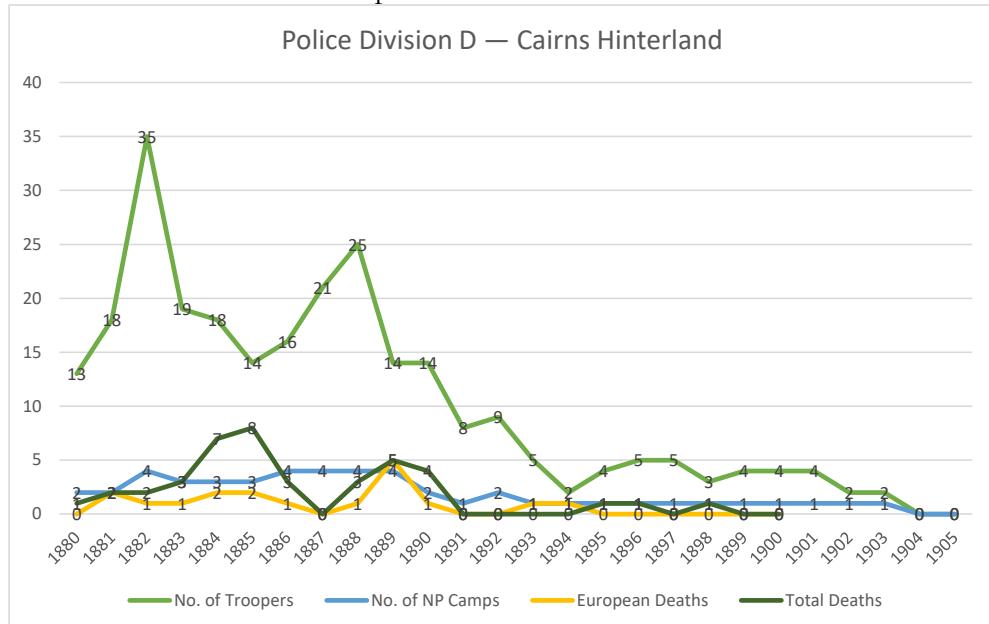
Turning to the analysis of the data, graphs 3, 4 and 5 attempt to portray the data in a way that might suggest a historical correlation between the native police response to Aboriginal depredations and trends in native police manpower densities and Aboriginal disturbance rates over a twenty-five-year operational period. The reader needs to note that Graph 3 includes data from my study of the maritime frontier.<sup>202</sup>

Graph 3 — Cape York Peninsula

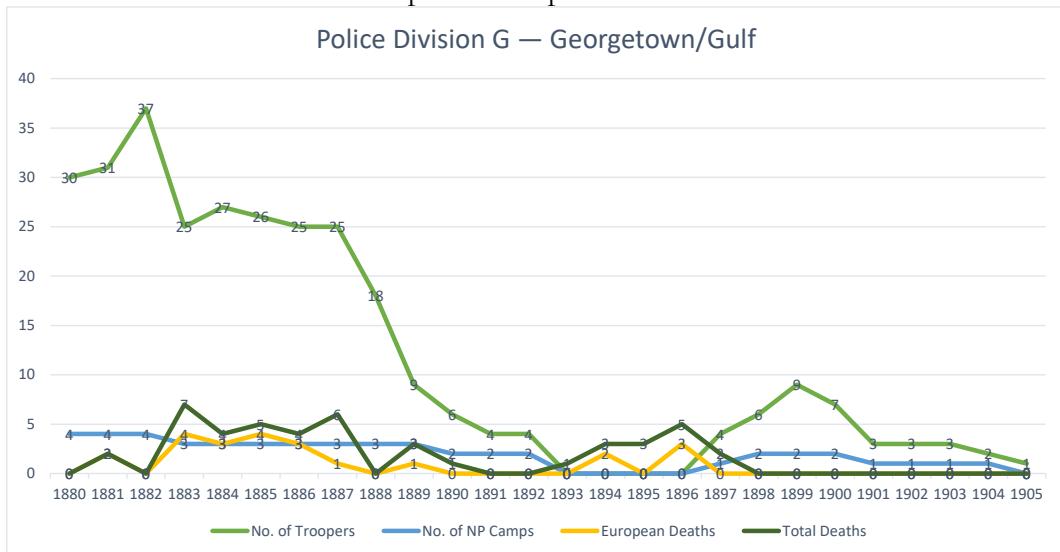


<sup>202</sup> BÈCHE-DE-MER AND THE BINGHIS by Paul Dillon, 2022, Chapter 2.

Graph 4 — Lower Peninsula



Graph 5 — Carpentaria Gulf



Each of the above graphs (3, 4 & 5) shows a peak in trooper manning levels and then a slow decline in staffing levels till they reach zero in the lower peninsula and Gulf districts. In the Peninsula districts, graph 3, they taper off until they reach 10 troopers. Native Police camps also peak and then fall away to zero except in the Peninsula where they decline to three camps. For the Peninsula, the growth in camp numbers saw a corresponding increase in trooper numbers which peak in 1888, with 8 camps maned by 66 troopers. This peak was in response to settler agitation on the maritime frontier in 1887 over the killing of bêche-de-mer crews by Aboriginals. The mortality rate was 6 killed.<sup>203</sup> The mortality rate of 27 in 1885 is an anomaly. Ten coloured crew were lost at sea from the *Annie*.<sup>204</sup>

Graph 4, Cairns hinterland, shows a peak in camp numbers in 1882 with a corresponding peak in trooper numbers. Then there is a crash in trooper numbers with the loss of one camp from the

<sup>203</sup> Telegraph 16 November 1887 p 5. QSA ITM847259 DR84056, 87/9790. Dillon: Bêche-de-mer, 2022.

<sup>204</sup> Dillon: Bêche-de-mer, 2022.

districts. The 1885 crash was caused by the Irvinebank incident, when troopers killed 4 Aboriginals. They were dismissed, and the camp was disbanded.<sup>205</sup> Trooper numbers recover and reach another peak in 1888, then fall away until 1894 when there was a slight increase in troopers again. In the Gulf districts, graph 5, troopers peak in 1882 at 37 men and taper off until 1893 when the native police were removed from the district. In 1897, additional troopers were added because the blacks attacked Mr R Shadforth of Wollogorang station.

However, camp numbers do not appear to correlate with total mortality rates. This is not surprising because the source material demonstrates that the government never had a comprehensive welfare policy for Aboriginals.<sup>206</sup> The economy operated as free-market capitalism. The government only intervened to advance or protect the interests of the market economy such as law and order<sup>207</sup> and infrastructure: roads, navigation, harbours, telegraphs and railways. With Aboriginals, the government's adopted a *laissez-faire* policy. Only when electors complained did the government respond and this involved stationing native police in the troubled area. By and large, this worked because uncontacted Aboriginals had an extreme reaction to strange blacks in their country, particularly ones that showed aggression. This meant the local blacks invariably backed down and moved on. However, when white settlement densities reached a critical size, particularly in the north with small agricultural land selections,<sup>208</sup> police move-on tactics collapsed. Probably because of the large numbers of Aboriginals and their reduced foraging opportunities, which triggered an epidemic of pilfering food, etc from white settlers.

The annual reports of the Commissioner of Police did not shed any meaningful light on what law enforcement policy the government or the police adopted in response to the criminal disruption of the frontier districts by Aboriginals as highlighted by the annual mortality rates over the twenty-five-year period of the study. Of course, in perusing the reports of the depredations by the blacks in chapters 2 to 4, the Aboriginals were not only killing settlers but the greatest impact they made was in the destruction of infrastructure, livestock, gardens, mining camps and transport and distribution services. The primary aim of the blacks was not the destruction of the infrastructure, but thievery from white settlements of food and useful items to enhance their tools—wooden digging sticks replaced by iron bars, spear tips replaced by metal tips.<sup>209</sup>

Turning to the public debate over the law-and-order issues arising from continued Aboriginal depredations on the settler frontiers of the colony, Mr Griffith asked, during the September 1882 sittings, what had the government done about the use of native troopers to control the Aboriginal population in the northern part of the colony. He had been told that about 150 blacks had been brought into Thornborough. He wanted to know what the government had done in changing the native police system. The Premier said nothing out of the ordinary had happened, except that from Thornborough he had received repeated telegrams stating that a great many blacks were coming in and they were in a state of starvation. The Executive authorised £500 for the relief of the blacks. Concerning the blacks elsewhere, efforts were made in Cooktown to employ blacks in different industries. The government was asked to assist in getting the blacks; he had authorised the police not only to assist but to see that the blacks were treated properly. Mr Griffith said he noticed that the number of native troopers had increased from fifty-two to seventy-two. The Premier said the additional troopers were required mostly in the north for new stations.

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<sup>205</sup> See pages 24 and 115.

<sup>206</sup> Welfare and the Gospel went hand in hand and was left to Christian Missionaries.

<sup>207</sup> Refer to the shearer's strike of 1894.

<sup>208</sup> The dimensions of which are uncertain. Further research may shed light on settler/Aboriginal conflicts.

<sup>209</sup> Kirkman, Noreen Suzanne (1984) *The Palmer goldfield, 1873-1883*. Honours thesis, James Cook University of North Queensland p 286. Sharp, Lauriston. "Steel Axes for Stone-Age Australians." *Practical Anthropology* os-7 (1952): 62 - 73.

The Colonial Secretary, Sir Samuel Griffith, in the Supply debate of 1885 said that the 128 native troopers provided for last year were now called "native trackers," indicating a change in the administration of the native police. The previous system was not at all satisfactory. The native police should be abolished. There were many parts of the colony where the work could be done better by white men, except, perhaps, tracking. There were, however, other parts of the colony where white troopers could not penetrate. For instance, in the northern jungles, a white man couldn't get through. It was, therefore, impossible to abolish native police altogether, and in all cases, at least two white police should be attached to every detachment of native police; and by degrees, the whole system would be abolished. Where, however, lives had been taken, something, of course, must be done; but he did not think the native police ought to be employed to avenge the killing of cattle and horses. The government could not meet all the requests that had been made. It must not be forgotten that the progress of settlement in the North had been of such a nature as to destroy the food supply of the blacks to a very great extent, especially where they were very numerous; and it was not to be wondered at that they occasionally helped themselves to the settlers' stock. He could quite sympathise with them when they were suffering from starvation. The practice of the black police making raids through the country in times past would not be allowed any longer.<sup>210</sup>

The Commissioner, under continued pressure from the government in 1885, made the following observations:

The Native Police are of little use in the suppression of crime other than that committed by blacks. The Native Police Force at present consists of 13 detachments, of one Sub-Inspector, one campkeeper, and from six to ten troopers. The annual cost exclusive of horses, arms, and clothing is £10,606 18 0. I take this opportunity of bringing to the notice of the Government, that the aborigines are pushed out of their hunting grounds by the rapid settlement of the land and the impossibility of preventing depredations being committed by them, no matter what force of Police is employed. The blacks are now deprived of their means of existence and naturally enough when in want of food will kill whatever they come across. It would be useless to direct the Police to arrest them, for to carry out such orders every black in the Colony would have to be made a prisoner and even the most deeply injured settler would hardly expect them to be shot down for merely killing cattle or stealing food. While settlement was sparse and large tracts of country were open to the aborigines, it was possible for the Police to keep them back from the settlers.<sup>211</sup>

*Cairns Post*, 16 April 1885:

The incessant raids made by the blacks lately, and still in active progress all over the far North, raises serious apprehension that no European pioneer can now venture beyond the strict boundary of police protection or martial law, except on strict condition of literally carrying his life in his hand. Attention has been so frequently drawn to this threadbare subject that it seems an almost idle waste of words so far as the police authorities and the Government are concerned to raise a finger asking for protection. The truth is, the aboriginal is becoming more and more audacious in his attacks, knowing well the weakness of the settlers' position, who has to fight single-handed against cunning at great odds.<sup>212</sup>

Graphs 4 and 5 show a decline in trooper numbers as a consequence of Griffith's new native police policy. However, the Peninsula districts continued to expand. The Commissioner of Police advised in 1886 that white police with native trackers instead of the native police were formed on the Laura, Moresby, and Mulgrave Rivers. The erection of the telegraph line to Thursday Island

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<sup>210</sup> Hansard LA, 24 September 1885 p 825-826.

<sup>211</sup> QSA ITM847159 DR78089, 85/4592.

<sup>212</sup> Cairns Post 16 April 1885 p 2.

and the settlement of the country in Cape York Peninsula would necessitate the establishment of native police camps.

The Colonial Secretary, when confronted with the 1887-8 estimates for the Queensland police force, asked the Commissioner of Police to furnish a return setting out the reasons for so large an increase in the estimates. On 29 August 1888, the Commissioner submitted his return, advising the Colonial Secretary that an increasing population and a greater demand for police stations in newly opened districts in the north contributed to the increase. However, what is of interest in the report is an accurate statement of the makeup of the native police, as per the table below.<sup>213</sup>

Native Police as of 29 August 1888.

| Officers | Campkeepers | Trackers | Cost per annum |
|----------|-------------|----------|----------------|
| 10       | 17          | 96       | £10,622 3. 8.  |

This statement by the Commissioner perhaps explains the highest density of troopers and native police camps in the Peninsula in 1888 as revealed by graph 3.<sup>214</sup>

In 1889, the Civil Service Commission examined the native police and recommended:

Wherever the services of trackers are required they should be placed in charge of white police, in other words, mixed camps. The existing arrangements form a fruitful source of extravagant expenditure. We look upon the employment of a large number of officers of such high rank and pay to control and direct the operations of so small a number of men as wasteful in the extreme. The evidence clearly proves that sergeants or senior-constables would be quite competent to manage these camps.<sup>215</sup>

The Commissioner of Police in 1889 advised that the Native Police camps at the Barron River, Palmer River, McIvor River, Carl Creek, Norman River, and Dunrobin were broken up, and troopers were reduced by 60. He reported the deaths of Sub-Inspectors R Little and G Warby; the former had charge of the Native Police at Eyre's Creek and the latter at Dunrobin, near Georgetown. Sub-Inspectors J Brooke and F Margetts resigned.

The separation of the four sub-inspectors from the native police, Little, Warby, Brooke and Margetts allowed the Commissioner overnight to wipe 60 troopers from the slate. The Peninsula graph 3 dramatically shows in 1890 a fall of 33 troopers and 3 camps; the lower peninsula graph 4 for 1890 shows a fall of 11 troopers and 2 camps; and the Gulf graph 5 of 1890 shows a fall of 12 troopers and 1 camp. The natural attrition of the sub-inspectors allowed the Commissioner to downsize the northern native police in keeping with government policy and the recommendations of the Civil Service Commission. Moreover, this drastic reduction in operational personnel from the frontier strongly confirms that the government's policy of feeding the blacks was working.

In 1894, H Tozer (Colonial Secretary) said:

In addition to the missions, there had been established about ten or twelve stations in Queensland. The Government found that a better system than the past system of using the native police and the rifle was that of giving food and getting their friendship by kindness instead of other ways. As a consequence, the amount of crime had decreased, and they had not to keep up a native police force at all in dealing with the blacks. The food system had been tried in Queensland, and he was glad it

<sup>213</sup> QSA ITM847288 DR69594, 88/7767.

<sup>214</sup> See footnote 203 above.

<sup>215</sup> Brisbane Courier 30 April 1889 p 6

proved a success. Speaking of the question of the distribution of blankets to the blacks, he said that in the year 1892, there were about 8,000 or 10,000 blankets distributed — more than a blanket for each black in the colony, whether civilised or savage. More blankets had been distributed than there were wild or tame blacks in Queensland.<sup>216</sup>

Aboriginal relief stations:

| Station Location             | Financial Year 1892/93 <sup>217</sup> | Financial Year 1896/97 <sup>218</sup> |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Atherton*                    | £232 5s 6d                            | £136                                  |
| Bloomfield*                  | £137 10s                              | £246                                  |
| Butchers Hill*               | £108 6s 8d                            | £91                                   |
| Cape Bedford*                | £133 6s 8d                            |                                       |
| Cullen Point, Batavia River* | £213 4s 10d                           | £233                                  |
| California Creek*            | £32 17s 6d                            | £44                                   |
| Cardwell*                    | £13 8s 6d                             | £17                                   |
| Coen*                        |                                       | £12                                   |
| Dugandan                     | £21 17s 6d                            |                                       |
| Daintree River*              | £72 4s                                |                                       |
| Deebing Creek, Ipswich       | £262 6s 7d                            | £575                                  |
| Fischerton Tate Tin Mine*    |                                       | £48                                   |
| Fraser Island                |                                       | £183                                  |
| Mareeba*                     |                                       | £47                                   |
| Marie Yaamba, Mackay         | £240                                  | £120                                  |
| Mount Orient*                | £104                                  |                                       |
| Montalbion*                  | £46 16s 9d                            |                                       |
| Mungindi                     |                                       | £47                                   |
| Musgrave*                    |                                       | £13                                   |
| Myola*                       |                                       | £115                                  |
| Myora                        |                                       | £163                                  |
| Port Douglas*                |                                       | £13                                   |
| Thornborough*                | £27 1s 6d                             | £118                                  |
| Thursday Is. mainland blacks |                                       | £112                                  |
| Turn-off Lagoon              |                                       | £20                                   |
| Union Camp*                  | £143 8s                               |                                       |
| Westwood                     | £27 7s 6d                             |                                       |
| Bowen                        | £8 8s 3d                              |                                       |
| Croydon*                     | £2 6s                                 |                                       |
| Taroom                       | £33 18s                               |                                       |
| Townsville                   | £19 16s                               |                                       |
| Whitsunday Island            |                                       | £19                                   |

\*Feeding Stations in the Peninsula and lower areas.

The Colonial Secretary said in the supply debate of 1895 that for the relief of aborigines, he sought another £1,000 to provide food in the North.<sup>219</sup> Mr Tozer, the Home Secretary during the supply debate of 29 September 1897, outlined the relief given to Aboriginals in the previous year through the police, the total being £3,208. For 1898, he was dividing the colony into tropical and non-tropical. The tropical portion was under the Commissioner of Police. The blacks there were to be allowed to return to their pristine habits, treated in a friendly way and assisted with food, making the blacks know that the whites were their friends; and keeping them as far as possible from drink and opium.<sup>220</sup>

<sup>216</sup> Brisbane Courier 3 May 1894 p 6. Telegraph 3 May 1894 p 5.

<sup>217</sup> QSA ITM6820 DR57971, folios 115-117.

<sup>218</sup> Hansard LA, 29 September 1897 p 1010.

<sup>219</sup> Hansard LA, 18 September 1895 p 989.

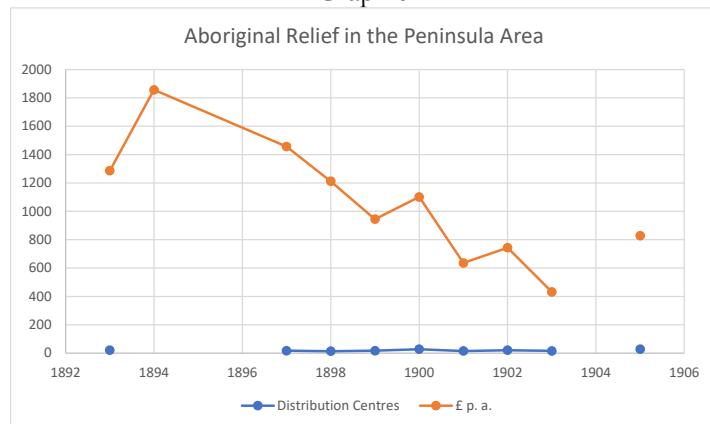
<sup>220</sup> Hansard LA, 29 September 1897 p 1010.

The Governor, on 30 September 1897, enquired of the Premier in regards the North Queensland Aboriginals and the Native Police. On 8 October, Mr Tozer replied that the Police Commissioner was to continue the employment of the Native Police north of the Tropic of Capricorn and to distribute food and tobacco. In the southern part of the colony where the conditions were altogether different, a less repressive protection was authorised. A Bill for the protection and better government of the Aboriginals of the colony was to be introduced.<sup>221</sup>

Horace Tozer, Home Secretary, 25 November 1897:

There are only 42 (native troopers) at present worked together in detachments, doing purely native police work, and these are all stationed in Cape York Peninsula. The native police have, as a force, been protective always. That it has at times been severely retaliatory has laid it open to the charge of having been unduly aggressive, and highly imaginative persons, without knowledge or practical experience, have frequently conjured up visions of wholesale murderous slaughter on the part of the native police merely for the purposes of contrast with unreasoning humanitarianism. The Commissioner of Police during an inspection tour last year in the Peninsula was dissatisfied with the native police system as he found it working, and it has undergone a complete reconstruction, with already highly satisfactory results. The native police in each district where their services are considered desirable are carefully instructed to protect the blacks from all forms of injustice by lawless whites, to warn them in an earnest and friendly manner against committing any offences on the settlers, and in case of an outrage by Aboriginals to take special care to capture or punish only those who are directly responsible. The white officers in charge of native police have received imperative orders to see that this pacific and conciliatory policy is faithfully administered. They are also entrusted with the distribution of food and tobacco to the Aboriginals as a satisfactory guarantee of genuine friendliness. The effect is already pleasantly conspicuous in the change among the Aboriginals throughout Cape York Peninsula. The plan of feeding the blacks, along with a general policy of kindness and forbearance, has done wonders in a brief period to inaugurate a reign of peace and terminate hostility between the two races. The working of this system will be materially facilitated by each party of native police, including at least one man belonging to, and speaking the dialect of the neighbouring tribes. While the Commissioner of Police is initiating this principle of protecting and improving the condition of the tribes in the more unsettled parts of the North, the system of reserves is being established to provide for the scattered remnants of the blacks in the older and settled districts of the South.<sup>222</sup>

Graph 5



The policy of rewarding Aboriginals for good behaviour with a food dole as outlined by Tozer and implemented by the Commissioner of Police worked. Graph 5 shows the level of funding peaking in 1894 and waning over time, as the bureaucracy became more efficient and exerted greater control over the Aboriginals. The Peninsula graph 3 shows that in 1898 there were 32 troopers and 4 native police camps with zero fatalities for the year. The lower peninsula graph 4

<sup>221</sup> QSA Item ID 6826 DR57632, 97/12483, frame numbers 52-53.

<sup>222</sup> Tozer Qld V & P Vol. II p 43. See also, Telegraph 18 December 1897 p 4.

shows that there were 3 troopers and 1 camp with 1 fatality. This was a blackboy named Pat murdered by blacks. The Gulf graph 5 shows that there were 6 troopers and 2 camps with zero fatalities. Moreover, the overall direction in which data moved over time revealed a downward trend which ultimately suggested they had ceased their destructive ways.

The food dole, if viewed from the perspective of the Aboriginal was a boon, as he was released from the arduous and time-consuming task of first catch your kangaroo. With stone age technology, it is not hard to accept that preparing a meal involved a significant amount of time and labour for the individual. For Aboriginals to be offered ready prepared food such as flour and beef, which only required cooking, it is not difficult to understand why they responded favourably.

With the enactment of *The Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act, 1897*, greater authority was given to the government for the control and regulation of the indigenous population. The powers and funding given to the protectors appointed by the Act together with the increased supervision extended by the amending enactments of *The Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act, 1901*, meant that the protectors had greatly enhanced powers of supervision over the indigenous population. The effect of these intrusive powers was to bring the Aboriginal from his untouched tribal condition to the status of a compromised individual known in the vernacular as a station or town black. He no longer had the bonding of tribal kinship or the strict metes and bounds of country. He relied heavily on white foodstuffs such as tea, sugar, flour and beef; wearing clothes; the use of grog and/or opium; and the abandonment or weakening of tribal customs and beliefs.

With the passing of the myall Aboriginals, the concept of unsettled or frontier country also faded. However, an Aboriginal remnant remained in and about the towns, shires, outback stations, and mining camps. Moreover, the aboriginal question remained alive concerning Aboriginal crime. The level of Aboriginal crime in the northern police districts of the colony was recorded by the northern protector of aborigines and those details are set out in chapter 4.

What happened to the Native Police might be told in the following manner. The native police as an organisation under the Police Act of 1863 consisted of a body of white men who were known as officers and held the military rank of lieutenant to begin with, and then they were given the police rank of sub-inspector. On the other hand, the troopers who were full-blood, initiated Aboriginals were not constables but armed trackers. The sub-inspectors were employed under the terms of the Police Act and, therefore, had certain rights and privileges. In 1885, the following individuals were designated as officers of native police.

Native Police Officers

| Names         | Camp          | Date of Separation | Remarks           |
|---------------|---------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| B Stafford    | Highbury      | 1888               | Resigned          |
| J Brooke      | Normanby      | 1889               | Resigned          |
| R K Little    | Cluney        | 1889               | Died              |
| F G Urquhart  | Cloncurry     | 1889               | To general police |
| G Warby       | Dunrobin      | 1889               | Died              |
| J White       | Glenroy       | 1889               | To general police |
| A Mossman     | Burke River   | 1890               | Resigned          |
| G Marrett     | Laura         | 1892               | To general police |
| E H Carr      | Barron River  | 1894               | Resigned          |
| L Poingdestre | Norman River  | 1897               | Resigned          |
| R Garraway    | Mossman River | 1906               | To general police |

From the above list, the only remaining individual in the native police was R Garraway, who on 1 January 1906, was posted to Roma Street in the police district of Brisbane: Thus, ending the native police.<sup>223</sup>

What was the Aboriginal version of these times, it is impossible to say. What is known from first principles is that man will steal and kill for self-preservation.<sup>224</sup> That Aboriginals preyed on settlers for reasons of self-preservation is beyond doubt. Furthermore, it is unnecessary to erect elaborate justifications for Aboriginal behaviour. Their reasons for stealing and the consequent killing of settlers in the process were for food, and metals to enhance their weaponry. On occasion, trespass by the colonists may have influenced their response. The overarching issue is why didn't the Aboriginals engage with the colonists.

W E H Stanner, the leading Australian anthropologist, who worked extensively with indigenous Australians, made the following observation regarding their ability for diplomacy or conciliation:

The blacks have never been able to make a formal protest, except by an occasional spear. They have never been able to stir and hold any lasting interest in their plight. They themselves have no notion of tribal tragedy on a national scale, nor perhaps would it interest them if they had. Most of their interests and loyalties are narrowly tribal. The petition sent to the King by eighteen hundred civilised natives in 1937, asking to be saved from extinction and given political representation in Parliament, was the only articulate national plea they have yet made on their own behalf, and they were almost certainly prompted to it.

The Aborigines were never politically minded enough to speak of their 'rights', or to demand minimum conditions for the co-operation they undoubtedly did give, and still give, in the work of settlement. They never set up any real competition for the land of which they have been dispossessed without compensation. Not having any established villages or hamlets they could, and did, bend their frontal line whenever the whites came, and after flinging a few spears, co-operated in their own destruction by accepting a parasitic role which enabled them to live peaceably near the intruding whites.<sup>225</sup>

The predominate reason for leftwing academics studying the Queensland Native Police has not been to write a factual and considered corporate history of the organisation but to portray the organisation as a state-sponsored instrument for the suppression and elimination of Aboriginals to advance the aims and goals of Austral-Metis, who agitate for greater political power and privileges.<sup>226</sup> The Black Armband school of thought approach the historiography of Australian Colonial Settler Studies with a fixed ideological axiom of resistance to invasion. Their articles and publications encourage unity of thought in support of this axiom by stressing and interpreting the historical sources and material in a tendentious and selective manner. The Black Armband school of thought are as Mr H Tozer said on 25 November 1897, "highly imaginative persons, without knowledge or practical experience, have frequently conjured up visions of wholesale murderous slaughter on the part of the native police merely for the purposes of contrast with unreasoning humanitarianism."<sup>227</sup>

These historians have written a version of the impact of white settlement by using all sorts of modern techniques for the reconstruction of an Aboriginal historical narrative. The most strident version of this Aboriginal history, which has been accompanied by extreme and aggressive

<sup>223</sup> QPG 1908 p 497. See p 79 above.

<sup>224</sup> R v Dudley and Stephens (1884) 14 QBD 273.

<sup>225</sup> W. E. H. Stanner, WHITE MAN GOT NO DREAMING, Essays 1938-1973. Australian National University Press Canberra, 1979 p 4.

<sup>226</sup> The Austral-Metis are a mixed-race group unleashed on the Australian community by Whitlamesque and identity politics claiming racial or ethnic connection to an Aboriginal heritage.

<sup>227</sup> See pages 66-67 above.

marketing with all the attendant propaganda gimmicks of *fausse histoire*, victimology, dispossession, massacres, and genocide, is the “invasion and resistance” version - known as the Black Armband school of thought.<sup>228</sup>

Lyndall Ryan et al from the University of Newcastle, published the website Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia 1788-1930. The webpage Statistics, for Queensland, records the following number of Aboriginals killed by colonists: 1880s – 484; 1890s – 20; 1900s – 6; and 1910s – 11.<sup>229</sup> The sources quoted by Ryan are not of substantial probative value and I, therefore, reject the numbers quoted in the website as doubtful and highly questionable.

Here is an example of what Mr Tozer was referring to:

Estimates of the number of Aboriginal people killed as a result of this conflict are difficult to assess, particularly since no systematic records were kept and many such deaths went entirely unrecorded for fear of the consequences in the post-Myall Creek era from the late 1830s onward. The most comprehensive attempt to calculate a reasonable figure is by Evans and Ørsted-Jensen. Using relatively conservative calculations based on a sample of historical accounts, they posited that over 40,000 Aboriginal people may have been killed by the NMP and settler-colonists in Queensland between 1859 and 1898. In all likelihood, this figure is likely to have been higher since their model was based in part on a total of only 85 NMP camps, each with an average duration of seven years, and excluded the earliest and latest periods of the NMP’s operation. Current research provides evidence of 174 camps across Queensland from 1850 to 1904 with an average duration of 8.5 years each, producing an escalated figure of 101,163; equal parts staggering and sobering.<sup>230</sup>



State Library of NSW, Call Numbers PXA 773/Box 6.

<sup>228</sup> Palmer, A. (1998). Colonial and modern genocide: explanations and categories. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 21(1), 89–115. <https://doi.org/10.1080/014198798330115> Good example of Tozer’s unreasoning humanitarianism.

<sup>229</sup> Ryan, Lyndall; Debenham, Jennifer; Pascoe, Bill; Smith, Robyn; Owen, Chris; Richards, Jonathan; Gilbert, Stephanie; Anders, Robert J; Usher, Kaine; Price, Daniel; Newley, Jack; Brown, Mark; Le, Le Hoang; Fairbairn, Hedy Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia 1788-1930 Newcastle: University of Newcastle, 2017-2022, <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.13/1340762> (accessed 27/06/2024).

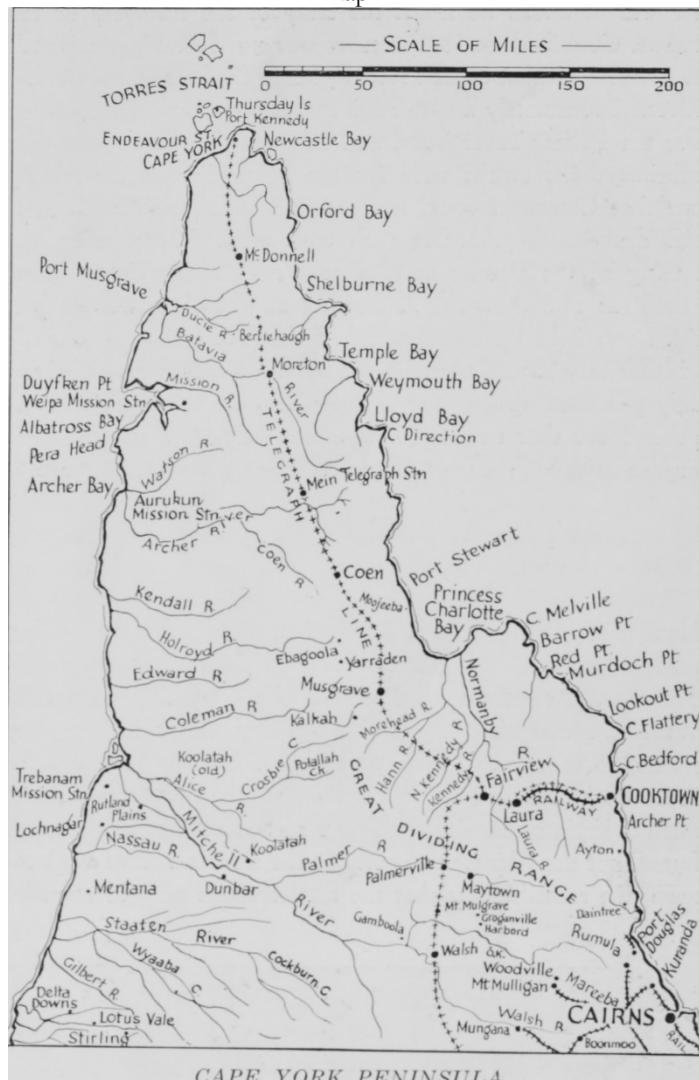
<sup>230</sup> Heather Burke, Bryce Barker, Lynley Wallis, Sarah Craig & Michelle Combo (2020): *Betwixt and Between: Trauma, Survival and the Aboriginal Troopers of the Queensland Native Mounted Police*, *Journal of Genocide Research*, DOI: 10.1080/14623528.2020.1735147 p 5. A mortality rate of 101,163 Aboriginals is poppycock; *C'est des sornettes*. See *Queensland Native Police The First Twenty Years* by Paul Dillon at pages 75-78 for an analysis of this dubious methodology.

Appendix A

Table A — Cape York Peninsula — Native Police Camps<sup>231</sup>

| Year | No. of Troopers | No. of NP Camps | European Deaths | Total Deaths | Camps  |
|------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|--|
| 1880 | 23              | 3               | 1               | 5            | Cooktown, Laura, Walsh River   |
| 1881 | 27              | 3               | 4               | 8            | Eight-mile, Laura, Walsh River   |
| 1882 | 28              | 3               | 0               | 11           | Cooktown, Glenroy, Laura, Walsh River                                    |
| 1883 | 34              | 5               | 2               | 4            | Cooktown, Glenroy, Laura, McIvor, Normanby                               |
| 1884 | 33              | 5               | 3               | 7            | Cooktown, Glenroy, Laura, McIvor, Normanby                               |
| 1885 | 49              | 5               | 4               | 27           | Cooktown, Coen, Glenroy, McIvor, Normanby,                               |
| 1886 | 42              | 7               | 1               | 4            | Cooktown, Coen, Cannibal Creek, Laura, Lynd, McIvor, Normanby            |
| 1887 | 48              | 7               | 4               | 10           | Cooktown, Coen, Laura, Lynd, McIvor, Normanby, Palmer                    |
| 1888 | 66              | 8               | 3               | 4            | Cooktown, Coen, Laura, Lynd, McIvor, Normanby, Palmer, Paterson          |
| 1889 | 41              | 6               | 6               | 9            | Cooktown, Coen, Laura, Lynd, Normanby, Paterson                          |
| 1890 | 33              | 5               | 3               | 7            | Cooktown, Coen, Laura, Lynd, Normanby                                    |
| 1891 | 34              | 6               | 0               | 8            | Cooktown, Coen, Laura, Lynd Junction, Musgrave, Normanby                 |
| 1892 | 34              | 5               | 0               | 8            | Coen, Fairlight, Laura T S, Lynd Junction, Musgrave,                     |
| 1893 | 30              | 6               | 8               | 14           | Coen, Laura T S, Lynd Junction, Musgrave T S, McIvor, Stewart's Creek    |
| 1894 | 29              | 6               | 1               | 3            | Coen, Eight-Mile, Lynd Junction, Maytown, Musgrave T S, Piccaninny Creek |
| 1895 | 31              | 6               | 2               | 6            | Coen NP, Eight-Mile, Lynd Junction, Maytown, Musgrave, Piccaninny Creek  |
| 1896 | 34              | 5               | 1               | 3            | Clayhole, Coen NP, Eight-Mile, Highbury, Musgrave                        |
| 1897 | 35              | 4               | 0               | 1            | Coen NP, Eight-Mile, Highbury, Musgrave                                  |
| 1898 | 32              | 4               | 0               | 0            | Coen NP, Eight-Mile, Musgrave, Palmer NP                                 |
| 1899 | 30              | 4               | 1               | 3            | Coen NP, Eight-Mile, Musgrave, Palmer NP                                 |
| 1900 | 30              | 4               | 1               | 1            | Coen NP, Eight-Mile, Laura, Palmer NP                                    |
| 1901 | 27              | 4               |                 |              | Coen NP, Eight-Mile, Laura, Palmer NP                                    |
| 1902 | 16              | 4               |                 |              | Coen NP, Eight-Mile, Laura, Palmer NP                                    |
| 1903 | 18              | 4               |                 |              | Coen NP, Eight-Mile, Laura, Palmer NP                                    |
| 1904 | 11              | 3               |                 |              | Coen NP, Laura, Maytown  |
| 1905 | 10              | 3               |                 |              | Coen NP, Laura, Maytown  |

Map 1



<sup>231</sup> Known as police division D — Cooktown from 1880. In 1890 Division D renamed Cook and included the Port Douglas Sub-Division. In 1896 renamed F District — Cook Sub-District. Compiled from annual Police Reports.

Map 2 — Cape York Patrol Areas

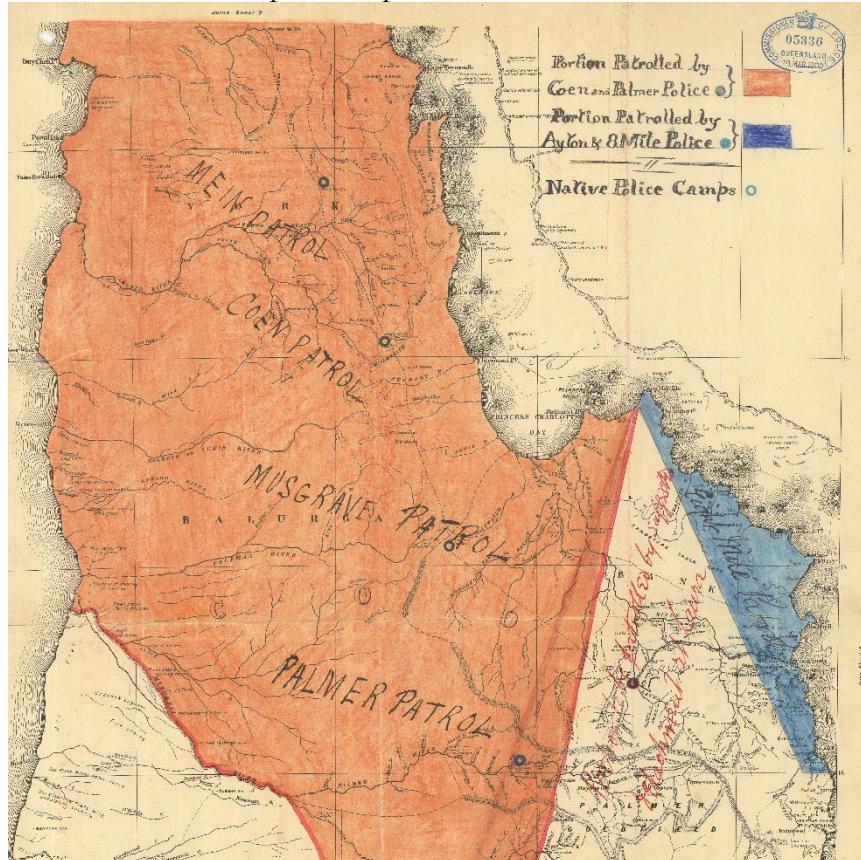


Table B — Cairns Hinterland — Native Police Camps<sup>232</sup>

| Year | No. of Troopers | No. of NP Camps | European Deaths | Total Deaths |   |
|------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|---|
| 1880 | 13              | 2               | 0               | 1            | Barron River, Mowbarry River                              |
| 1881 | 18              | 2               | 2               | 2            | Port Douglas, Barron River                                |
| 1882 | 35              | 4               | 1               | 2            | Port Douglas, Barron River, Herberton, Johnstone River    |
| 1883 | 19              | 3               | 1               | 3            | Port Douglas, Barron River, Nigger Creek                  |
| 1884 | 18              | 3               | 2               | 7            | Port Douglas, Barron River, Nigger Creek                  |
| 1885 | 14              | 3               | 2               | 8            | Port Douglas, Barron River, Mossman River                 |
| 1886 | 16              | 4               | 1               | 3            | Port Douglas, Barron River, Mossman River, Mulgrave River |
| 1887 | 21              | 4               | 0               | 0            | Port Douglas, Barron River, Mossman River, Mulgrave River |
| 1888 | 25              | 4               | 1               | 3            | Port Douglas, Barron River, Mossman River, Mulgrave River |
| 1889 | 14              | 4               | 5               | 5            | Port Douglas, Mossman, Mulgrave, Nigger Creek             |
| 1890 | 14              | 2               | 1               | 4            | Mossman, Nigger Creek                                     |
| 1891 | 8               | 1               | 0               | 0            | Nigger Creek  |
| 1892 | 9               | 2               | 0               | 0            | Mossman, Nigger Creek                                     |
| 1893 | 5               | 1               | 1               | 0            | Nigger Creek  |
| 1894 | 2               | 1               | 1               | 0            | Nigger Creek  |
| 1895 | 4               | 1               | 0               | 1            | Nigger Creek  |
| 1896 | 5               | 1               | 0               | 1            | Nigger Creek  |
| 1897 | 5               | 1               | 0               | 0            | Nigger Creek  |
| 1898 | 3               | 1               | 0               | 1            | Nigger Creek  |
| 1899 | 4               | 1               | 0               | 0            | Nigger Creek  |
| 1900 | 4               | 1               | 0               | 0            | Nigger Creek  |
| 1901 | 4               | 1               |                 |              | Nigger Creek  |
| 1902 | 2               | 1               |                 |              | Nigger Creek  |
| 1903 | 2               | 1               |                 |              | Nigger Creek  |
| 1904 | 0               | 0               |                 |              |   |
| 1905 | 0               | 0               |                 |              |   |

<sup>232</sup> Known as police division D — Port Douglas from 1880. In 1890 Division D renamed Cook and included the Port Douglas Sub-Division. In 1896 renamed F District — Cairns Sub-District. Compiled from annual Police Reports.

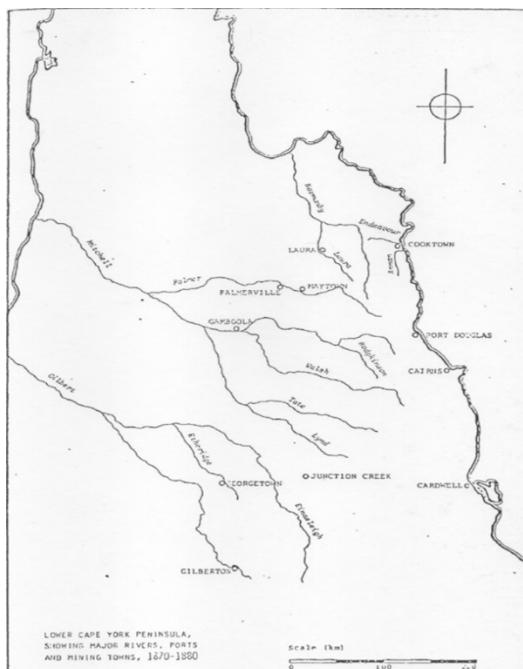


Table C – Gulf Country – Native Police Camps<sup>233</sup>

| Year | No. of Troopers | No. of NP Camps | European Deaths | Total Deaths | Native Police Camps                              |  |
|------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|--|--|
|      |                 |                 |                 |              | Native Police Camps                              |  |
| 1880 | 30              | 4               | 0               | 0            | Norman River, Carl Creek, Cloncurry NP, Dunrobin |  |
| 1881 | 31              | 4               | 2               | 2            | Norman River, Carl Creek, Cloncurry, Dunrobin    |  |
| 1882 | 37              | 4               | 0               | 0            | Carl Creek, Cloncurry, Dunrobin, Norman River    |  |
| 1883 | 25              | 3               | 4               | 7            | Carl Creek, Dunrobin, Norman River               |  |
| 1884 | 27              | 3               | 3               | 4            | Carl Creek, Dunrobin, Norman River               |  |
| 1885 | 26              | 3               | 4               | 5            | Carl Creek, Dunrobin, Norman River               |  |
| 1886 | 25              | 3               | 3               | 4            | Carl Creek, Dunrobin, Norman River               |  |
| 1887 | 25              | 3               | 1               | 6            | Carl Creek, Dunrobin, Norman River               |  |
| 1888 | 18              | 3               | 0               | 0            | Carl Creek, Dunrobin, Norman River               |  |
| 1889 | 9               | 3               | 1               | 3            | Normanton, Camooweal, Turn-Off Lagoon            |  |
| 1890 | 6               | 2               | 0               | 1            | Normanton, Turn-Off Lagoon                       |  |
| 1891 | 4               | 2               | 0               | 0            | Normanton, Turn-Off Lagoon                       |  |
| 1892 | 4               | 2               | 0               | 0            | Normanton, Turn-Off Lagoon                       |  |
| 1893 | 0               | 0               | 0               | 1            |  |  |
| 1894 | 0               | 0               | 2               | 3            |  |  |
| 1895 | 0               | 0               | 0               | 3            |  |  |
| 1896 | 0               | 0               | 3               | 5            |  |  |
| 1897 | 4               | 1               | 0               | 2            | Trun-Off Lagoon (attack on Shadforth)            |  |
| 1898 | 6               | 2               | 0               | 0            | Normanton, Turn-Off Lagoon                       |  |
| 1899 | 9               | 2               | 0               | 0            | Normanton, Turn-Off Lagoon                       |  |
| 1900 | 7               | 2               | 0               | 0            | Normanton, Turn-Off Lagoon                       |  |
| 1901 | 3               | 1               | 0               | 0            | Turn-Off Lagoon                                  |  |
| 1902 | 3               | 1               | 0               | 0            | Turn-Off Lagoon                                  |  |
| 1903 | 3               | 1               | 0               | 0            | Turn-Off Lagoon                                  |  |
| 1904 | 2               | 1               | 0               | 0            | Turn-Off Lagoon                                  |  |
| 1905 | 1               | 0               | 0               | 0            | Turn-Off Lagoon                                  |  |

Table D — Aboriginal Relief in the Peninsula Area

| Year | Distribution Centres | £ p. a. |
|------|----------------------|---------|
| 1893 | 21                   | 1287    |
| 1894 |                      | 1857    |
| 1897 | 17                   | 1457    |
| 1898 | 14                   | 1212    |
| 1899 | 17                   | 945     |
| 1900 | 28                   | 1102    |
| 1901 | 15                   | 636     |
| 1902 | 21                   | 744     |
| 1903 | 16                   | 432     |
| 1904 |                      |         |
| 1905 | 28                   | 828     |

<sup>233</sup> Known as police division G — Georgetown from 1880. In 1890 Division G renamed Burke. In 1896 renamed G District — Cook Sub-District. Compiled from annual Police Reports.

|      | <b>Whites Killed by the Blacks</b> | <b>Whites Wounded by the Blacks</b> |
|------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1880 | German Charley                     |                                     |
| 1881 | Harry Martin                       | Jack Williams                       |
|      | Thomas Marshall                    | Joseph Sculler & James Simpson      |
|      | George Dyas                        |                                     |
|      | William Turner                     |                                     |
|      | Henry Kaye                         |                                     |
|      | Unknown x 2                        |                                     |
|      | Mrs Watson & baby                  |                                     |
| 1882 | John Ward Skene                    | Caswell Drew                        |
| 1883 | Charles Desailly                   | Donald McKenzie                     |
|      | George Butcher                     | Maginness                           |
|      | Walter Clark                       |                                     |
|      | W H Crawford                       |                                     |
|      | Marcus Beresford                   |                                     |
|      | John Fraser                        |                                     |
|      | Unknown                            |                                     |
|      | Robert Bredt                       |                                     |
| 1884 | James John Morgan                  | Eb Nott                             |
|      | Richard George Bailey              | John Wild                           |
|      | Jack Regan                         | Ernest Henry                        |
|      | John Conway                        |                                     |
|      | George Foster                      |                                     |
|      | James Powell                       |                                     |
|      | Steve Barry                        |                                     |
| 1885 | Charles Eyre Massey                | E Corr                              |
|      | George Woods                       | unknown                             |
|      | Donald McAulay                     | Hugh Donnelly                       |
|      | A S Bernard                        |                                     |
|      | Unkown x 3                         |                                     |
|      | Unknown                            |                                     |
|      | Peter the Greek                    |                                     |
|      | William McLaughlin                 |                                     |
|      | Patrick Warren                     |                                     |
| 1886 | C H Townsend                       | Dan Sullivan                        |
|      | William Bayles                     | Patrick Horan                       |
|      | Census taker                       | John Kennedy                        |
|      | Frederick Tribbler                 |                                     |
| 1887 | William Owen                       | E J Loder                           |
|      | James Ferguson                     | Henry Williams                      |
|      | Julius Van Falkenburg              | Nicholas Minister                   |
|      | Andrew Anderson                    |                                     |
|      | Joseph McNair                      |                                     |
| 1888 | Alfred Wright                      | John Carrigan                       |
|      | Edmund Meagher                     | C B Sweetland & Blake               |
|      | August Louis                       |                                     |
|      | Charles Mogg                       |                                     |
| 1889 | George Tarrant                     | James Evans                         |
|      | Edmund Watson                      | Urquhart                            |
|      | Frank Paske                        | A Thomas                            |
|      | John Clifford                      | F Hann                              |
|      | Unknown x 3                        |                                     |
|      | A Wavell                           |                                     |
|      | Christopher Kane                   |                                     |
|      | Luke Love                          |                                     |
|      | Michael Freeman                    |                                     |
|      | John Williams                      |                                     |
| 1890 | H R Jones                          | Edward Parker                       |
|      | Michael Wholahan                   | Billy Wilson                        |
|      | George Hobson                      | Charles Burstow & Dan Maynard       |
|      | John Rowe                          |                                     |

|      |   |                                    |
|------|---|------------------------------------|
|      | James Pratt   |                                    |
|      | James robinson  |                                    |
|      | Joe, a crew member  |                                    |
| 1891 |   |                                    |
| 1892 |   |                                    |
| 1893 | George Waters<br>Harry Nichols<br>Peter Mobeck<br>Martin Oien<br>Charles Bruce<br>Samuel Rowe<br>Harry Greenlaw<br>George Jones<br>William Kelloway | William Tucker & Charles Lawrence  |
| 1894 | Bill Baird<br>Lanigan<br>Ferguson<br>Walter Nathan  | R Rogers & Jim Watson<br>Du Moulin |
| 1895 | Pat Bannon<br>Frank Lee   |                                    |
| 1896 | Donald Mackenzie  |                                    |
| 1897 | Jack Cole   | Robert Shadforth                   |
| 1898 |   |                                    |
| 1899 | Peter Poulsen   |                                    |
| 1900 | P Culhane   |                                    |



Frederic Charles Urquhart standing with three unidentified members of the Native Police Force, ca. 1885. State Library of Queensland.

# 1880

## D DIVISION — COOKTOWN.

Mr George Murphy, of Cooktown, reported that the blacks visited his selection on the Endeavour, eight miles from town. This was the second time in two months. Sub-Inspector B Stafford arrived in Cooktown, 4 May 1880, and on the following morning started to patrol the district in the neighbourhood of Cooktown. Horses were also speared on the Endeavour and reports of spearing of cattle running on the Annan River were also made.<sup>234</sup>

A miner named German Charley left his mates on the Left-Hand Branch of the Palmer, distant about fourteen miles from Byerstown, prospecting, as he had not returned in the time allowed, his mates commenced a search. They discovered his tracks and followed them to where he had washed a dishful of mud. Numerous tracks of natives were observed, but no further trace of their lost mate could be found. It was therefore surmised that the blacks had carried him off to their camp and possibly eaten him. The police at the Upper Laura were informed, but the constable in charge stated that Sub-Inspector B Stafford had been removed, and consequently could render no assistance.<sup>235</sup>

On the McIvor River, near Cape Bedford, cattle were slaughtered and settlers exposed to danger. The blacks in large numbers came to within 400 yards of the tenements, frightening the women. Sub-Inspector Charles Marrett and troopers commenced patrolling the district. The position of outlying settlers had become more critical each month; no sooner was one raid punished than another was committed in some other direction. More protection was needed in the district.<sup>236</sup>

On 20 September, the blacks killed a Chinaman at Mossman's creek on the Palmer and carried off another alive. Senior Constable Johnstone proceeded to the locality where he ascertained that the report was correct concerning the spearing of a man, but there was no truth in the statement that another had been made prisoner. From the scanty information to hand, it would appear several Chinese miners were working together when spears were thrown, upon which the Chinamen made tracks. When the Chinese returned, they found their missing brother with a spear in his body. The unfortunate man was conveyed to Maytown for medical treatment when he died 12 miles from Maytown. Warden Gill went out to Mossman's on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, but could learn no additional particulars. Sub-Inspector Charles Marrett was then on the scene with his boys. This was in the same locality in the early days, when a few sable warriors dispersed some 800 Chinese, many of whom were well armed, and made captive two of the cowards.<sup>237</sup>

During late September, the blacks were out in force again at Butcher's Hill Station, South of Laura and five of Mr Earl's best bullocks had been speared, while the rest of his cattle had been

<sup>234</sup> Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 15 May 1880 p 3. QSA ITM847027 DR65836, 80/3866.

<sup>235</sup> Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 18 September 1880 p 2. Queenslander 2 October 1880 p 4.

<sup>236</sup> Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 11 September 1880 p 2.

<sup>237</sup> Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 16 October 1880 p 2.

scattered all over the country. Five weeks later, a similar outrage occurred in the same locality, and on that occasion the troopers went out to punish the myalls, but they had disappeared. The cunning savages watched the movements of the troopers closely; the moment that Marrett's force was withdrawn to assist Sub-Inspector H Fitzgerald's goodwill expeditions to the blacks, they swooped down upon the stations. Mr Harvey Fitzgerald was acting under instructions from the Commissioner. The withdrawal of troopers for the Cape Bedford expeditions cost the Laura settlement very dear.<sup>238</sup> Further, and more serious depredations had occurred, the remains of Mr Earl's six bullocks and a cow had been found. The latter was cut up close to the homestead. Mr Earl had only limited assistance on the station, some of the hands were at the Coen, and it was dangerous for him to attempt to interfere with the blacks, who were both daring and numerous. Sub-Inspector Marrett had recently patrolled the neighbourhood.<sup>239</sup>

## D — Port Douglas

The blacks made a desperate raid on cattle and horses near Thornborough, spearing a milch kine within a couple of miles of the dairy yards. The ranges at the head of the Little River and Gorge Creek, tributaries of the Hodgkinson, afforded them safe places of concealment from which they made predatory excursions. They drive cattle and horses before them into ravines where they pith and butcher them at leisure. Within the last twelve months, one visit by the native police had been made to the locality.<sup>240</sup>

The blacks were killing horses again. Sub-Inspector Carr left for the Mulgrave with his black troopers, but he was not likely to meet with the horse killers. Knowing, as they did, that the police were coming, they entered the scrub where the troopers were not likely to go. And so, it goes on from day to day, and from months to years. The settlers lose their horses and cattle, and perhaps their lives: the native police follow on the tracks of the depredators as speedily as possible, which means a few days, a week, or a month, according to their previous engagements; and there ends the business. In the meantime, the unprotected settler works hard to find the money to replace the animals killed and eaten by the blacks.<sup>241</sup>

Sub-Inspector Carr patrolled the Mulgrave and the Inlet country. The uselessness of these flying visits from a detachment of the native police force was apparent, for the day after Mr Carr left Goldsborough, a valuable horse was killed close to that town, and a heifer was speared a few miles from Cairns before he returned to his camp on the Upper Barron. A petition asked the Colonial Secretary to place a detachment of police between Cairns and the Mulgrave; until this was done, there was no protection from the aborigines.<sup>242</sup>

Cooktown, September 3. Fitzgerald's survey camp, on the Johnstone River, north branch, was attacked by a party of blacks who killed a kanaka left in charge and took away everything portable. Troopers went in pursuit.<sup>243</sup>

Cairns, September 4. It was reported that the blacks killed a horse this week.<sup>244</sup>

<sup>238</sup> Capricornian 11 December 1880 p 15.

<sup>239</sup> Capricornian 24 December 1880 p 10.

<sup>240</sup> Queenslander 4 December 1880 p 711.

<sup>241</sup> Telegraph 10 August 1880 p 3.

<sup>242</sup> Brisbane Courier 21 August p 6.

<sup>243</sup> Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 4 September 1880 p 2. Sydney Morning Herald 9 September 1880 p 8.

<sup>244</sup> Telegraph 11 September 1880 p 2.

Gilbert River. A horse belonging to the Telegraph Department was killed and eaten by the blacks close to the telegraph station. A large mob of Aboriginals were near Georgetown, and the native police were sent for.<sup>245</sup>

#### **F — BLACKALL.**

Telegraphic information had been received from Blackall, that Mexico Station, in the Mitchell district, and owned by Mr R Skuthorpe, had been stuck up by the blacks. The blackfellows bailed up the station cook and a blackboy for a whole night. They returned on the following night and seized the blackboy, cutting the unfortunate wretch to pieces. Troopers were sent out to capture the perpetrators of this outrage.<sup>246</sup>

The Inspector of Police at Blackall was informed by Sub-Inspector Eglinton that the blacks had stuck up Noranside Station, on the Burke River, and attempted to murder Mr Kennedy. The sub-inspector started for the station, but no further particulars were to hand.<sup>247</sup>

#### **G — GEORGETOWN.**

January 24. The blacks killed a beast near town, and have pilfered Mr Taaffe's station at the Twelve-mile. Sub-Inspector Armit from Bynoe was after them.<sup>248</sup>

# 1881

D DIVISION — COOKTOWN.

Mr J Williams' selection, on the Endeavour River about forty miles from Cooktown, was once again visited by the blacks, who speared several head of cattle. The native police, however, were quickly in pursuit of the depredators.<sup>249</sup> Mr Williams further reported that he found on the horns of a dead cow about ten yards of 3/8in. rope, cleverly made by the natives, with a loop at one end and the other end, passed through, forming a lasso. He also found several spears and a variety of other articles, such as chalk, sinews of animals, native working tools, a penknife, and a butcher's knife, all in a blacks' camp. Some spears were pointed with wire about the size of that used for fencing, one of them having a sharp pointed piece about 4ft. long. The chief curiosity of all is a little black boy, about six years old, who Mr Williams found in the same locality, the Aboriginals, no doubt, having fled on the appearance of the whites, leaving the boy behind. The little fellow appeared very intelligent, though rather shy, and could speak a few words of English; his limbs were very small, and his hair brown and straight. Mrs Williams had dressed him up in a grey suit, in which he appeared to be quite happy.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Telegraph 29 March 1880 p 2.

<sup>246</sup> Telegraph 1 September 1880 p 2.

<sup>247</sup> Morning Bulletin 7 September 1880 p 2.

<sup>248</sup> Queenslander 20 March 1880 p 359.

<sup>249</sup> Capricornian 28 May 1881 p 15.

<sup>250</sup> Queensland Times 18 June 1881 p 6.

The Byerstown mailman reported that the blacks had attacked the Chinese camp at Normanby diggings, about forty-five miles from here. They killed one Chinaman, and after picking his bones clean left the skull and skeleton entire.<sup>251</sup>

## D — PORT DOUGLAS.

Port Douglas, 13 August. The blacks were spearing cattle and horses in the broad daylight within half-a-mile of the native police camp on the Mowbray River.<sup>252</sup>

Wild River. A miner, Jack Williams, working at the great Western, was speared in the back and two other parts of the body. He was cutting into the hill when he suddenly received the first spear.<sup>253</sup> On 27 November a meeting was called to discuss the recent spearing of two miners at the Western, and the discovery of a horse being roasted and five more led away to the gins' camp. Recently, Joseph Sculler, one of the speared men, was brought into town by miners; on the following day, James Simpson, the second man, was also brought in. As Sculler was coming in, Sub-Inspector Carr was going out with nine troopers to "interview" the blacks. It was impossible for one inspector to patrol effectively this extensive district.<sup>254</sup>

On 7 December, the mangled remains of the missing miner, Harry Martin were discovered about 300 yards from his camp. Owing to the length of time elapsed since the probable day of the murder — 19 November — the remains were unrecognisable but for the hair on the head and whiskers. What portions of the body the blacks did leave were subsequently torn and strewed about by the native dogs and hawks, and these were found in the last stage of putrefaction. The hands and legs had been taken away by the blacks, cut off with a tomahawk. The boots were left behind. By the appearance of the ribs and a hole in the skin, there was no doubt the unfortunate victim was speared. An inquiry was held but was adjourned, and summonses were issued for the further attendance of the men Sculler and Simpson, who were speared at the same time. Sub-Inspector Carr, with nine troopers, returned from the Western but failed to discover the miscreants.<sup>255</sup>

The Commissioner of Police received a telegram from Inspector Isley at Port Douglas dated 18 July:

Sergeant Breen writes that a man named Thomas Marshall has been either lost or killed by the blacks on the Thornborough and Maytown Road. The Thornborough police are in search.<sup>256</sup> There appears very little prospect of finding any traces of the man Marshall, recently reported from Port Douglas as having been lost between Maytown and Thornborough.

On 23 July information was received from John Hamilton and mates, miners on route from Maytown to the Wild River, to the effect that on their arrival at a creek six miles on the Maytown side of the Mitchell they saw some clothing and saddlery, and from the appearance of a campfire near the spot they concluded it had not been lit for some days. They examined the clothing, finding in the pockets miners' rights and a telegram addressed to Thomas Marshall.<sup>257</sup> A bridle was picked up at a Chinaman's camp a few hundred yards away. Further information was to hand, stating that a party on arriving at the creek some days prior to Hamilton found some men's clothing strewed

<sup>251</sup> Brisbane Courier 31 October 1881 p 2. Capricornian 19 November 1881 p 15. QSA ITM847055 DR66261, 81/4709

<sup>252</sup> Queenslander 27 August 1881 p 262.

<sup>253</sup> Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 21 May 1881 p 2.

<sup>254</sup> Brisbane Courier 10 December 1881 p 6.

<sup>255</sup> Morning Bulletin 8 Dec 1881 p 3 & Brisbane Courier 17 December 1881 p 7.

<sup>256</sup> Telegraph 19 July 1881 p 2.

<sup>257</sup> Full name possibly George Thomas Marshall, Queenslander 25 October 1879 p 515.

about, which they rolled up in a bundle. Grave fears were entertained that Marshall was either lost or murdered. Constable Clifford and a black tracker left Thornborough for the scene. They reported finding clothing, a pack and riding saddle, and two horses, the property of Marshall, about twenty miles from his last camp. The horses answered to the description of the receipts found in the clothing. Marshall was latterly a shareholder in the Queen of the North, Maytown. The police made a thorough search of the locality for three days without finding any tracks.<sup>258</sup>

## **F — BLACKALL.**

Sub-Inspector Thompson, Dunrobin, Georgetown, 26 January 1881 to Inspector Maxwell Armstrong.

The following telegram from Sub-Inspector Lamond: Found Sub-Inspector Dyas's remains on Sunday morning, 23rd instant, speared, stripped, and buried by blacks. From traces, judge that he was speared on Thursday morning, 20th January, while asleep. Blacks on spearing him ran away, but returned at daylight to rob and bury him. He, on being speared, must have fired the gun, turned over, and bled to death. No signs of struggling. Blacks have taken clothes, gun, &c. Opened grave and saw white man interred. He had written Dyas on the ground half-mile from camp. Could not get tracks away from scene of murder; have his bridle and cartridge belt empty.<sup>259</sup>

It was subsequently advised by Sub-Inspector Lamond that he had recovered from the blacks, Mr Dyas' clothing, pieces of his gun, and a watch and gold chain.<sup>260</sup>

Morven, 16 February 1881. Sergeant Kinsella, of Morven, and Constable Cameron, of Blackall, with two black trackers, went out in search of a blackfellow who had been robbing several places in the vicinity, and known to be a desperate scoundrel. After running his tracks for over eight miles, they came upon him camped in some timber. The sergeant told him what he was wanted for, and the constable dismounted to handle of him but he at once rushed to where his accoutrements were, and sprang in front of the constable, flourishing a tomahawk in his right hand, while in his left was another tomahawk and nulla-nullas. He threw the first tomahawk at the constable, hitting him on the hand. The constable then fired at him, when he threw the other tomahawk at the constable, hitting him on the left arm above the elbow, cutting him severely, and knocking the revolver out of his hand, which the blackfellow pounced upon, and while holding the revolver distributed his nulla-nullas very freely, again hitting the constable on the back. By this time the shot began to tell upon him, and he surrendered after he had thrown all his weapons. Upon examining him, the bullet entered his left breast and come out under the right shoulder-blade; he lived for about an hour. He was a notorious scoundrel and thief, and kept this neighbourhood in an unsettled state for a long time. Upon searching his camp, there were blankets, coats, trousers, and shirts; also, a large number of other items were removed in a spring cart, which were later claimed.<sup>261</sup>

## **G — GEORGETOWN.**

The correspondent at the Leichhardt River advised on 24 April:

I regret to have to report the death of a man named William Turner, who was stockman at Kamilaroi (Messrs Carr and Curr's). He was murdered by the blacks.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> Brisbane Courier 4 August 1881 p 2 & 9 August 1881 p 5.

<sup>259</sup> Brisbane Courier 16 February 1881 p 5. Capricornian 19 February 1881 p 15. QSA ITM567091 DR50933.

<sup>260</sup> Week 5 February 1881 p 6. QPG Vol. XVIII] 5 February 1881[No. p 20. See p 184 below.

<sup>261</sup> Western Star and Roma Advertiser 23 February 1881 p 2.

<sup>262</sup> Brisbane Courier 26 May 1881 p 2. QPG 1881 p 94. QSA ITM2725441 DR84686.

It was reported in May that three cases of robbery by the blacks had occurred very close to Cloncurry. The hut of a gardener, two miles downriver, was twice cleared of all rations; and the camp of some diggers. In that case, the blacks carried away everything except the old tent—rations, clothes, blankets, firearms, gold and papers—in fact, left the owners as destitute as though a fire had swept through the camp. As for the police, Sub-Inspector Moran was away trying to procure rations for his troop, Constable Carrigan was hors de combat, and Constable Nobbs was both sick and fully engaged attending on his senior, Camp-Sergeant Smith, who was blind with the blight. The residents did not care to take matters into their own hands for fear of raising another howl of indignation from the lovers and protectors of the poor blacks.<sup>263</sup>

Then in July, Sub-Inspector R M Moran was transferred and replaced by Sub-Inspector Henry Pollock Kaye from the Diamantina. Mr Kaye received several "requisitions" and had been on regular patrol, including the middle branch of the Cloncurry where the blacks had been spearing cattle.<sup>264</sup>

Then the Commissioner of Police received the following telegram from Sub-Inspector Nichols at the Woolgar:

Sub-Inspector Kaye was speared through the heart by the blacks on 14 September 1881. The murder took place on the main road between the top camp and the reefs here. I am taking Mr Kaye's detachment and mine out after the murderers.<sup>265</sup>

# 1882

## D DIVISION — COOKTOWN.

The Annan blacks evidenced their semi civilisation (*Cooktown Herald*) by raiding a Mongolian homestead at Mount Cook on the evening of Boxing Day. The Chow was feasting with his European patrons while his black brudders were clearing out half-a-ton of sweet potatoes, 2 cwt. of pineapples, and three fat pigs. The police suspect bêche-de-mer boys, but we believe that the Mount Cook scrub affords shelter, with water, fish, and game convenient, to a band of the tribe who harassed McCarey and Corbett until these gentlemen found that justice could be more promptly administered by Mr Martini-Henry than by Mr Fitzgerald.<sup>266</sup>

Sub-Inspector Carr was informed, on arriving at White's Station, on the Walsh, of the raid that had lately been made on the horses and cattle running in the neighbourhood, and at once started in pursuit of the perpetrators. On arriving at the camp where the darkies had feasted, it was evident that they had been surprised by the private party of whites who had started to drive them from the district and had left in hot haste leaving portions of both cattle and horses behind them. Their tracks were then followed for some considerable distance. When finding that they had taken to the hills the chase was given up, and the party returned to town.<sup>267</sup>

<sup>263</sup> Brisbane Courier 25 May 1881 p 3.

<sup>264</sup> Brisbane Courier 27 July 1881 p .5

<sup>265</sup> Telegraph 23 September 1881 p 2. See p 185 below.

<sup>266</sup> The Brisbane Courier 8 January 1883 p 5.

<sup>267</sup> Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 14 January 1882 p 2.

A blackboy named Toby was brought up at the police court on 4 April, charged with committing a criminal assault upon a girl 7 years old, at the Two-mile Scrub and was remanded. Another black reached town yesterday from the north side of the river, speared in two places. He is supposed to be a deserter from a bêche-de-mer fishery station, but nothing certain is known concerning him, as it has been impossible to obtain an interpreter who can understand his language.<sup>268</sup>

The Palmer. The *Chronicle* of 2 December reported: A party of Chinese on their way to Cairns about ten days ago were attacked by a tribe of blacks—only five escaped, seven of the Chinese being killed. The fugitives arrived at Granite Creek with the fatal news, and Tong Hop and Constable Dawes brought the information to Maytown. Only the hats and portions of clothes worn by the unfortunate deceased were found. The bodies were probably carried off to satisfy the cannibal propensities of the marauders.<sup>269</sup>

## D — PORT DOUGLAS.

Port Douglas, November 4. Depredations by the blacks were frequent, and stock speared wholesale within a distance of four miles from the town, right down to the Valley of the Mosman. Mr Crees had several beasts killed close to his homestead. It was quite a common thing with the blacks to make a raid about this time of the year, with the densely wooded ranges near the town affording them a secure refuge, from which it was difficult to dislodge them.<sup>270</sup>

On 31 March, an atrocious murder was committed by the blacks at Nigger Creek, four miles from Herberton. Mr John Ward Skene was out looking for his horses without firearms. From the few words the murdered man spoke while dying, the blacks came upon him right on the main road, and ascertaining he had no firearms attacked him, the poor fellow tried to defend himself from them with his bridle. One spear was driven right through his chest, entering under the arm on the one side and the point just protruding under the other arm. In trying to run away from them, this spear was caught between the trees and broke off close to the flesh. Another spear was through the shoulder, about 2in. below the collar-bone, and so firmly embedded was it in the muscles that it was with the greatest difficulty Mr Long, who attended the dying man, could extract it. How the poor fellow ever got out of their hands at all seems astonishing, with four spears in different parts of his body, two in vital parts. Yet he did so and managed to reach Moss's Horse and Jockey Hotel, about a mile from where he had been attacked, and two miles and a-half from Herberton. Arrived here, his first request was for a drink of tea; his next that his sister might be sent for, who was in town, and to whom he was very much attached. His brother, Mr Peter Skene, arrived with her in time to see him die, but not to receive his last words. The poor fellow was too far gone and could not articulate, though he tried several times to speak to them. He died within an hour or two after the attack upon him. The deceased was a man well known and liked on the field and none who knew him but will hear of his death with mingled feelings of indignation and pity. Sub-Inspector Douglas and his troopers left town the morning after the murder, but have returned unsuccessful. The wretches were still at large to commit other atrocities. This was the fifth man speared by the blacks here, each within a mile or two of town.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> *Queenslander* 8 April 1882 p 417.

<sup>269</sup> *Morning Bulletin* 15 Dec 1882 p 4.

<sup>270</sup> *Queenslander* 18 November 1882 p 694.

<sup>271</sup> QSA ITM2725770 DR100749; ITM847066, 82/1685. *Brisbane Courier* 17 April 1882 p 3; *Telegraph* 17 April 1882 p 3. Qld PG Vol. XIX.] 29 April 1882 [No. 9, p 81.

The Commissioner of Police received a telegram from Thornborough stating that a blackfellow belonging to a party of natives camping near the town murdered his gin by beating her about the head with a tomahawk. The murderer escaped.<sup>272</sup>

## G — GEORGETOWN.

Police Protection in Burke District.

Sir, Regards our police protection on the Leichhardt, Gregory, and Nicholson rivers in the Burke district. There is a native police station at Carl Creek, about 130 miles from Burketown, up the Gregory River. Its position is such that even if the officer in charge was an energetic person, it would be more than he could do to attend to the whole of the district he is supposed to superintend.

The blacks have been very troublesome about here lately, and will always be so at this time of the year, until they are put down by force. They have been killing Messrs Favenc, Brodie, and De Salis's cattle, on the Nicholson River. Mr Hedley, who is in charge of the stock, noticed the first killed about Christmas, and he at once sent a requisition to the officer in charge of Carl Creek to come down and disperse the blacks, but no notice was taken of his letter, and they continued killing his cattle until, at great inconvenience, he had to disperse them himself. Rather hard lines that a person with his hands full of work should have to do police duty. They have also been killing cattle on Messrs Travers and Gibson's station, but as the manager is not a great believer in the native police, he did not send for them, but did the needful himself. I have also heard that a requisition was sent in from Fiery Downs, and was not attended to, but cannot cite it as a fact. This is from one who has suffered on the Albert and Nicholson. Gulf of Carpentaria, 22 January.<sup>273</sup>

Burketown, Jan. 28. The blacks were playing havoc in the district, killing cattle whenever they got a chance. They nearly wiped out one of Mr Armit's troopers and then tried to trap Mr Hann. That old bird was not to be caught with chaff, however, and he still lives.<sup>274</sup>

# 1883

## D DIVISION — COOKTOWN.

Cooktown, January 5. Mr Donald McKenzie, of Kennedy station, Laura River, who was speared through the chest by blacks on Sunday last, arrived last night by coach. His injuries were so serious that he was not expected to recover. The station was surrounded by nearly 300 blacks at the time.<sup>275</sup>

The *Cooktown Herald* of 6 January thus narrates two serious outrages by the blacks:

Mr D McKenzie, of Kennedy station, situated on the Kennedy River, and, distant, about 133 miles from Cooktown, was speared by a black on Sunday morning last about 10 o'clock. Mr McKenzie was washing a horse's back in a paddock close to his homestead when a black from a neighbouring camp walked deliberately up close to him and drove the spear into his back below the right shoulder blade. It passed through his body, the point protruding at his breast under the right nipple. The black

<sup>272</sup> Brisbane Courier 9 December 1882 p 5.

<sup>273</sup> Queenslander 22 April 1882 p 498.

<sup>274</sup> Queenslander of 22 April 1882 p 486.

<sup>275</sup> Brisbane Courier 6 January 1883 p 5.

assassin walked away quite leisurely while his victim tried to reach the hut in which arms were kept. The wounded man was brought in by Cobb and Co.'s coach on Thursday, and, although weak and feverish, will, we hope, soon recover under the skilful treatment of Dr Kortüm. It was fortunate that the boy from Breezer Plains called at Kennedy on Sunday for letters when poor McKenzie managed to scrawl on a letter "badly speared." Mr Balser's nephew lost no time in riding across and conveying the sufferer in time to meet the coach at the Laura. By the same coach, Mr Bristow, of Gamboola, who was recently speared by the blacks, reached town to consult Dr Kortüm and then proceeded to Sydney. Although his wound is almost healed, he has a harassing cough, and it is feared that there is an ulcer near the right lung. The man who speared him had, the night before, been presented with clothes and had otherwise been treated kindly when he visited the station. In both these cases, the blacks were allowed to hang about the stations in considerable numbers, sometimes as many as 100, and in both cases, they returned treachery and blood for kindness.<sup>276</sup>

On or about 28 January (*Cooktown Herald*) the Normanby blacks made a raid on the cattle of Messrs Earl and Wallace. It is not yet known how many were killed, but the bones, &c., of eleven were found, and one or two other animals had spears in their sides. Sub-Inspector Margett, [sic] with five troopers, passed through the run on the day that the relics of the raid were discovered, but, as usual, the police moved onto their usual beat without either affording protection or inflicting punishment. The settlers, however, accompanied by their boys, followed the blacks, recovered some cattle, and drove the tribe into the almost inaccessible gorges and caves in the dividing range. Mr T Morris recently lost two valuable horses, and it was evident that either the tribes must be blockaded and driven back, or else the settlers will have to give up their lands. If a few settlers could do what seemed impossible for an expensive troop of black police, it was time that the latter was disbanded, and a small force of hardy and experienced bushmen enlisted in their stead.<sup>277</sup>

Cooktown, August 23, 1883. One of Surveyor Embley's kanakas was brought into town last night by the Maytown coach. He has four spears in him—one in the side of his head and three in his back. He was out with another kanaka hunting for horses on the Bizzant River last Monday when he met with a mob of friendly natives, who tried to take his rifle from him. He resisted them, so they speared him. The other kanaka escaped, and the wounded man was brought to McDermott's station on the Lower Laura, where the coach picked him up. He was sent to the hospital under the care of Dr Kortüm to extract the spear from the boy's head six days after the wound was inflicted. The spear entered below the temple, passed under the ear, and lodged in the neck. August 28, Dr Kortüm extracted the spear from the neck of Mr Embley's kanaka, and the patient was improving. The portion extracted was 4in. long.<sup>278</sup>

## D — PORT DOUGLAS.

On or about 16 January, Charles Desailly was speared by the blacks. The deceased was in the employ of Mr Middlemiss and was engaged tailing cattle eight miles from the Union Camp on the Hodgkinson River. The blacks in the vicinity were troublesome and Desailly telegraphed Mr Middlemiss, who was then at Herberton, to send him another man. Mr Middlemiss immediately engaged a man but found the man was on a spree, and not likely to leave Herberton. Thereupon Mr Middlemiss started himself, and on reaching the camp found that Desailly was missing. It appeared that the blacks had speared some horses, and Desailly, accompanied by a blackboy of Mr Middlemiss's, drove them back towards Mount Mulligan and followed them up. Desailly and the blackboy then became separated, and soon after the blackboy found Desailly's horse tied to a tree, but though he searched he could not see anything of the rider. Mr Middlemiss despatched the boy

<sup>276</sup> Brisbane Courier 12 January 1883 p 5.

<sup>277</sup> Brisbane Courier 17 February 1883 p 4.

<sup>278</sup> Queenslander 1 September 1883 p 352.

into Thornborough to inform the police, and having done so commenced a search. Half-a-day later, Mr Middlemiss found the object of the search—dead. It was in one of those narrow, rough gorges running into the heart of Mount Mulligan. On each side of the gorge rose steep masses of rock, and large pieces of rock and heavy boulders strewed the bottom of the gorge and rendered it difficult to walk. On one of those flat pieces of rock about 5ft. or 6ft. high lay the missing man. He was lying full length on his chest with his hands stretched out in front. Between his hands was his revolver tightly clenched; the revolver was pointed into the gorge, and it was evident that he had not had much time to use it, as five chambers out of the six were loaded. He had two barbed spears right through the body, and after receiving these he seemed to have been untouched by the blacks. His coat was found a few yards distant; he had flung it off so as not to impede his escape. The whole story seems plain enough. He mounted his horse, armed only with a six-chambered revolver, and followed them. After going a certain distance, the way became too rough for his horse, he dismounted and tied the animal up to a tree; revolver in hand, entered the gorges of Mount Mulligan. He proceeded (as his tracks show) to the blacks' camp and there he received one of the spears. Afraid that he might be overcome by numbers, he hastened to retreat and was within about a mile and a half of his horse when he met his fate. There was only one chamber of his revolver discharged, but it is surmised that he fired several rounds and loaded again as he had only a few cartridges left when found. The five chambers that were loaded were all right, as Mr Middlemiss discharged them the next day and they went off all right. He was buried near the place where he was found, and an inquiry into the matter was held in Thornborough.<sup>279</sup>

On 14 July 1883, Ernest Carr, Sub-Inspector, Barron River wrote to the Colonial Secretary as follows:

There has now been no outrage committed in my district for the last six months except the murder of Mr Charles Desaley (sic, Desailly) who was himself entirely to blame for his untimely end. The black who speared Mr Desaley has since been killed by his own tribe.<sup>280</sup>

It is recorded that the two blackfellows who murdered poor Desailly some weeks since at Thornborough have been roasted and eaten by their tribe. Says the Thornborough correspondent of the *Townsville Bulletin*:

This is a fact, and Sub-Inspector Carr has their teeth. From the construction of a previous sentence, it isn't clear whether Carr has the teeth of the roasted ones or the cannibals. It's mixed up like this: The two blacks killed Desailly, and probably ate part of him; the others niggers killed and ate him; and now Carr's got their teeth. Carr-nivorous to think of, ain't it?<sup>281</sup>

The inquest held on the body of Charles Desailly dated 13 March 1883 at Thornborough found that the cause of death was speared by the blacks and that there were no suspicious circumstances. The death of the deceased was investigated by Constable Carroll of Thornborough police station.<sup>282</sup>

Intelligence from Thornborough identified a stockman speared by the blacks, named Maginness. The spear entered his body at the right aide, glanced by the ribs, and passed through his back. The wounded man managed to break off part of the spear in a forked tree, and succeeded in reaching Union Camp, where the piece left in his body was extracted. He was recovering. The attack was

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<sup>279</sup> Brisbane Courier 31 March 1883 p 5 & Morning Bulletin 29 March 1883 p 2.

<sup>280</sup> QSA ITM847097 DR77947, 83/3847.

<sup>281</sup> Queensland Figaro 26 May 1883 p 7.

<sup>282</sup> QSA ITM2726206 DR90842.

made on Maginness about fourteen miles downriver, below Union Camp. Inspector Carr and six troopers were in pursuit of the blacks.<sup>283</sup>

Port Douglas, March 3. The blacks had been playing up at Mitchell Vale station, about twenty miles from the port. Messrs Fraser and Rodney reported numerous cases of cattle speared. The blacks, who make their raids upon the stock grazing in the open country, were difficult to get at in consequence of the dense scrub of the surrounding mountains, to which they retreat as soon as they obtain a supply of beef. The owners of the station say that if the black troopers were ordered to visit that locality for about three weeks, that would put an end to cattle spearing.<sup>284</sup>

Daintree River. Two of Mr Daniel Henderson's working bullocks galloped into camp with several spears sticking in them. One of them was so badly treated by the blacks that he had to be roped and thrown in the yard to cut the point of the spear out, which had gone down alongside the shoulder bone. Bullocks speared seldom recover properly. The blacks also speared, killed, and roasted a saddle-horse belonging to another cedar-getter, and all that was found were a few bones. When the last outrages were committed, a party went out to hunt them as it was about two years since a detachment of native police visited the river. When *Vigilant*, Sub-Inspector Douglas in command, visited in March 1883, it was believed that she had come to show the blacks up for their latest outrages, but she left 24 hours later.<sup>285</sup>

On or about 23 April, a man named Richard Kiely, a selector on the Daintree River, was reported missing. It was supposed that he had been drowned, as his flat-bottomed dingy was found bottom up in the river, which was flooded, having risen 25ft.<sup>286</sup> Daintree River, April 26. Mr Carr, of police, reached Port Douglas and started at once in the *Vigilant* for the river. Unfortunately, the steamer struck the bar, as the heavy floods, combined with the squally weather, had broken adrift the buoys which marked the channel through the bar; the steamer had to wait all night for the tide. She entered the river on Thursday morning, and Mr Carr and five native police arrived at Mr J W Steuart's selection. The inspector then proceeded to the place of the fatal accident. A careful search was made in the scrub, on the sandbanks, in the backwater places, and along the river bank on both sides all down the river, but without the slightest degree of success.<sup>287</sup>

Herberton, the *Advertiser* of the 10<sup>th</sup>, reported:

During Sub-Inspector B R Stafford's absence recently from Glendhu, a mob of blacks "stuck up" the Police Station, where Mr Stafford's family resided. Fortunately, the sergeant in charge was quite equal to the emergency, and notwithstanding the absence of the troopers who were with the sub-inspector, he dispersed the blacks.<sup>288</sup> Mr Fagan, a dairyman, accompanied by his son Simon, in January, engaged two horses from the firm of Stansfield and Douglas of Herberton for going to Mr Collin's station to make a purchase of cows, for a dairy in the neighbourhood of Herberton. It was known that Fagan, with his son, passed St. Ronans' station on his return with the cattle. Since that time nothing had been seen or heard of them, and fears were held for their safety. Mr Sub-Inspector Nichols started off with his troopers in search.<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> Capricornian 17 November 1883 p 8.

<sup>284</sup> Brisbane Courier 14 March 1883 p 6.

<sup>285</sup> Queenslander 17 March 1883 p 406.

<sup>286</sup> Queenslander 19 May 1883 p 766 & 1 December 1883 p 871. Brisbane Courier 14 May 1883 p 3.

<sup>287</sup> Brisbane Courier 21 May 1883 p 2. Queenslander 1 December 1883 p 872. Not included in statistics, doubtful blacks involved.

<sup>288</sup> Morning Bulletin 22 February 1883 p 3.

<sup>289</sup> Brisbane Courier 10 April 1883 p 5.

Sometime in October at Scrubby Creek, Herberton, Mr W C Maund had scarcely left his residence a quarter of an hour, in his wagon, when his young son, twelve years of age, who was engaged planting or digging, saw, at about twenty-five to fifty yards distant, a blackfellow aiming a spear at him. The lad called his father, although he knew the latter to be absent, and made for the house, but during the run he caught sight of two more blacks approaching under the shade of the fence. The lad followed his father, whom he pulled up in about three-quarters of a mile, and, when the two returned to the house, they found the three blacks patiently waiting at the house, where Mrs Maund was in a delicate state of health. Mr Maund immediately flew to his gun, when the blacks, dodging from tree to tree, disappeared, but he thought it prudent to fire several shots at a tree so the miscreants might see that his aim was sure. After some time, Mr Maund feeling sure that the blacks would not return, at least on that day, again went on his journey, but, before he had proceeded a quarter of a mile, his son again pulled him up, and informed him that the blacks had returned. They hurried back, when Mr Maund found his second son keeping the blacks at bay by firing a revolver—the first time he had used such a weapon. Of course, they again disappeared. A party was immediately organised but to no effect. The blacks robbed Glenny's place of all its contents, and, with an axe they stole, battered in Walsh's door. They also robbed Thomas and Garland's place twice, and Mr Thomas was compelled to remove his family to Cairns. Two blacks were discovered in the bed-chambers at Rogan's, and Surveyor Gwynne's kanaka had to apply to Mr Maund for a rifle to keep the blacks off and, on his return, saw the blacks robbing Garland's camp. The native police had visited the locality.<sup>290</sup>

#### **F — BLACKALL.**

Winton police reported that George Butcher has been found murdered by blacks, twenty miles from Chatsworth station, on the mail track from Boulia to Cloncurry.<sup>291</sup>

#### **G — GEORGETOWN.**

E A Hungerford, Walter Clark, and two black boys, started from Normanton about the end of October 1882 with sixteen head of horses and about two months' rations. They intended to go to Somerset and explore the country as they went along. They had two rifles, two revolvers, and one shotgun. They continued for about six weeks, when they turned back because of scrubby and mountainous country, which was found impassable. They travelled back about 120 miles, until they reached the south side of the river Archer, when Clark and Hungerford agreed that Hungerford should push onto Normanton with four of the best horses, while Clark remained behind with one blackboy and ten horses, three or four of which were very weak and not able to make long stages. Hungerford reached Miranda station from the Archer in two weeks and four days. The distance from the Archer to Miranda station was about 300 miles. Hungerford reached his home station Strathmore eight days before Christmas and did not send anyone back for Clarke. Hungerford reported the matter to Mr St. George PM when he arrived in Cooktown on 15 January 1883.

On 29 November 1883, W A Tully, Surveyor General received a telegram from A Morisset, Land Commissioner, Normanton reporting that:

...while at Dunbar station, Lower Mitchell on 3 November found human remains with mutilated saddlery and one pair of trousers. Latter articles identified by Hungerford's black boy Jemmy Low with me as belonging to Walter Clarke; have despatched bones for medical testimony and trousers for identification by Hungerford. Please inform Mr McGroarty PM.

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<sup>290</sup> Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 27 October 1883 p 3.

<sup>291</sup> Morning Bulletin 25 January 1883 p 3.

On 24 April 1884, on returning to Laura after searching for Clarke, Inspector Fitzgerald advised the Police Commissioner that certain blacks had told him that Clarke, his blackboy and his horses were killed and eaten by the blacks.<sup>292</sup>

Sergeant Byrne reported to the Commissioner of Police from Georgetown, that about 1 o'clock on 18 May 1883 he received information from Sub-Inspector Poingdestre that a blackboy was reported to have been murdered in the scrub about 400 yards from the police barracks. On reaching the scene of the murder, the sub-inspector found the body of the Aboriginal. There was a wound on the top of the head over the right temple, and the skull was broken. The police found the splinter bar of a wagon near the body with blood and hair upon it. A blackboy, who accompanied the police and who saw the murder, reported that he could identify two white men as the murderers. On being taken to the Royal Hotel where there were several men, he identified Stephen McCann as the man who struck the fatal blow, and McCann was at once arrested. The blackboy subsequently identified a man named Frank Butler, who was in McCann's employ, as assisting in the murder. Butler was then arrested. The murdered boy was in McCann's employ. The prisoners were to be brought up at the Police Court on the 19 May.<sup>293</sup>

On 2 June at Normanton, Stephen McCann and his drayman, Frank Butler, were again examined at the Police Court on the charge of the wilful murder of McCann's blackboy Dickey. Both prisoners were remanded, and heavy bail allowed. Complications arose through the conflicting evidence given by the blackboy and some of the white witnesses.<sup>294</sup> The two men accused of the murder of a blackboy, Dickey, were discharged by a full bench of magistrates for insufficiency of evidence. They were rearrested; the police alleging they had obtained additional information. They were put on trial, which caused immense inconvenience to a large number of witnesses. One man had to be brought a distance of 300 miles.<sup>295</sup> Stephen McCann, publican of Normanton, was acquitted at the Cooktown Circuit Court of having wilfully murdered a blackboy named Dickey. Judge Cooper summed up rather against McCann, who was defended by Tom Campbell, late candidate for the Cook Parliamentary electorate. The jury, however, tendered a verdict of "Not guilty," and, in accepting it, His Honour said that he had no moral doubt in his mind that McCann killed Dickey, but he supposed the jury believed that McCann had done so without any felonious intent. His Honour hoped that McCann's narrow escape would be a warning to him.<sup>296</sup>

The death of Mr W H Crawford, which took place at Rocklands in the latter part of March or early in April, occurred under the following circumstances:

The deceased, who was the manager of Rocklands station for Messrs MacDermott, Loughnan and Scarr, left the head station with his blackboy to muster cattle up the Georgina River, while the stockman mustered those down the river. When last seen the blackboy was carrying his (Crawford's) revolver. After the deceased had been absent from the station for more than three weeks, a party consisting of Mr D E Murray, the stockman and a black tracker in the employ of Mr D McKay, started in search of him. After some trouble, they tracked him from one deserted blacks' camp to another, and at last discovered his body, which was identified by the clothes, as he had been dead at least a fortnight. A two-handed nulla nulla (species of club) was found near, which had evidently been the weapon by which he was killed. It is said that there was also a hole in the chest, supposed to be a bullet wound. It is supposed that he was killed by his own blackboy, doubtless assisted by the

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<sup>292</sup> QSA ITM847126 DR78014, 84/5143. Queenslander 20 January 1883 p 113. Telegraph 23 May 1883 p 2. Queenslander 7 July 1883 p 5. Queensland Figaro 30 August 1884 p 10. Note that Clarke's skeleton was found but incomplete, missing hands and feet.

<sup>293</sup> Telegraph 23 May 1883 p 2.

<sup>294</sup> Queenslander 9 June 1883 p 881.

<sup>295</sup> Queenslander 7 July 1883 p 6.

<sup>296</sup> Figaro 24 November 1883 p 11.

others. His death was reported to the police, who went up to Rocklands and out after the blacks, who, no doubt, were promptly "dispersed". I hear that Crawford's blackboy, who, by the way, is a myall taken out of the bush by Crawford himself, was one of the "dispersed".<sup>297</sup>

In reference to the murder of Mr Crawford, manager of Turstone station, the Commissioner of Police received the following letter from Sub-Inspector Lamond, dated Carl Creek, 17 April, and containing the blacks' version of the outrage. The letter stated:

Crawford galloped after the blacks, asking his own boy Peter to go after them also. Peter stopped to kill an iguana or something; the blacks evidently showed fight, and Crawford commenced firing at them, emptying his revolver. Peter then came up and Crawford hit him for stopping behind. Peter then called out to the blacks, as Crawford had emptied his revolver to bring him a two-handed waddy.<sup>298</sup> The blacks did so, and Peter galloped after Crawford, hit him behind on the head, and the other blacks finished him. The police followed the blacks and punished the adult males. They also recovered Mr Crawford's property, consisting of a revolver, cartridges, clothing, and a blanket.<sup>299</sup>

Jimmy Downs, an old bushman at Rocklands station, sends the Normanton *Herald* fuller particulars concerning the manner of the killing of Mr Crawford.

Jimmy was with the party who followed the tracks of the deceased gentleman, and he states that the indications were quite plain to experienced bushmen. Crawford had not been toying with the black's gins. From the tracks, Crawford had evidently come upon the blacks' tracks by accident and turned them at right angles from his route, rounding them up to see what mischief they were after, as is the custom on all cattle stations in the Gulf country. He then, after rounding them up and finding they were doing nothing harmful, let them go and went, perhaps, two hundred yards to get a drink. While drinking, Downs is of opinion, he saw the blacks coming down upon him and tried to get on his horse, which was rearing and plunging, but the blacks were too quick for him and struck him down before he could mount. His tracks were quite plain, and one could follow every position that he was in. There were his footprints where he got water, and the mark of his heels where he had been trying to hold his horse. The nulla-nulla was broken into three pieces, and the deceased's head was fractured completely. Peter, his blackboy, was no doubt "coulah" on Crawford, and held up the revolver in sight of the blacks to show them that Crawford was unarmed. Then the brutes rushed him.<sup>300</sup>

### **Murder of Cadet Marcus Beresford**

The depositions taken at the inquiry into the death of Mr Marcus Beresford, of the native police force, who was murdered by the blacks on the night of 24 January, about twenty-four miles from Farley head station, in the Mckinlay Ranges, were as follows:

On 17 January, Mr Beresford, in charge of five troopers, left Devoncourt station for Chatsworth. Nothing further was seen of him by white men until the report of his murder was brought in by three of the troopers, all of whom had been badly wounded. The other two reached Farley head station, but were too badly hurt to proceed further. It was stated that Mr Beresford had been killed by the blacks while asleep and his body was found, as the troopers had described, rolled up in blankets and lightly covered over with sand. The skull and forehead were smashed in, and there was also a spear wound in the right thigh. All round where the body lay were tracks of the blacks, and a great quantity of their implements of war were strewn about, many of the latter being stained with blood. All the witnesses agree in the belief that there is no reason to suspect the troopers of foul play. Indeed, the two troopers who reached Farley head station had quite a number of spear points

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<sup>297</sup> Brisbane Courier 14 June 1883 p 3. Telegraph 23 June 1883 p 5.

<sup>298</sup> The first report was a two headed waddy not a two-handed waddy.

<sup>299</sup> Brisbane Courier 25 June 1883 p 4.

<sup>300</sup> Queensland Figaro 4 August 1883 p 3.

in them, and the other three, as before stated, were severely wounded. A grave was dug on the spot, and, on the order of Mr A A Hart, JP, the body was interred. A rough head and foot stone were laid to mark the place of his burial, and the grave was paved round with rough stones, to keep the heavy rains from washing the earth away.<sup>301</sup>

Sub-Inspector Thompson telegraphed the Commissioner of Police from Georgetown that he had received a telegram from Carl's Creek, dated 18 October, stating that a traveller from the McArthur River, South Australia, reported that the blacks attacked Mr Hollin's camp there, killing a man named Frazer and a black boy, and wounding another black boy. A correspondent at Normanton sent the following telegram, under Monday's date:

Authentic information was received to-day of the murder by blacks of John Fraser and a civilised black boy, on the McArthur River, about 20 September. Fraser was travelling with the Limmen Bight Company's cattle, which were in charge of John Clarke. The deceased, who was formerly employed on Sir Samuel Wilson's Yanko station, had two brothers in Victoria, one being a wheelwright in Ballarat.<sup>302</sup>

## **E — TOWNSVILLE.**

Ingham. The second telegram reported that Trooper Chapman had brought news that Mr Stafford's boy had found the remains of a white man who had been murdered by the blacks on Dalrymple Creek, about twenty miles from Ingham and fifteen miles from Cardwell. Tomahawk wounds were found on the neck, and a spear wound on the skull. Deceased is supposed to be a Norwegian, who was travelling from Herberton to Ingham about five weeks since. Senior-Constable Gillanders had ordered a constable from Cardwell to go out and investigate the matter.<sup>303</sup>

# 1884

## **D DIVISION — COOKTOWN.**

Inspector Fitzgerald advised that the blacks had attacked a Chinamen's camp at Fine Gold Creek, one of whom was badly speared, and then they burnt the camp. The native police were patrolling in the neighbourhood.<sup>304</sup> The blacks had also speared several head of cattle at Keating Station, and also two horses at Cabbage-tree Creek. Constable O'Byrne found a yard made by the blacks, with two horses in it, ten miles from the Laura police station. The horses were being fed on cut grass and had been ridden by the blacks.<sup>305</sup>

The Commissioner of Police received the following information on 28 August from Inspector H. Fitzgerald, of Cooktown:

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<sup>301</sup> Queenslander 24 March 1883 p 469; Western Star 24 March 1883 p 2. QSA ITM2726165. See p 187 below.

<sup>302</sup> Queenslander 10 November 1883 p 749.

<sup>303</sup> Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 22 February 1883 p 3. Brisbane Courier 22 February 1883 p 4.

<sup>304</sup> Brisbane Courier 29 February 1884 p 4.

<sup>305</sup> Qld Times 27 March 1884 p 3.

It was reported here yesterday that a Mr E Nott, whilst travelling with cattle to the Coen River, was speared by the blacks at Salt Water Creek. Sub-Inspector Marrett has since started to investigate the matter.<sup>306</sup>

Mr Nott arrived here late last night. He was speared by the blacks on Thursday morning, 21st instant, near the mangroves on Salt Water Creek, at Princess Charlotte's Bay. Mr Nott had turned out his cattle and was moving a few from near the mangroves when he was suddenly speared. The spear was over 10ft long with four prongs, three of which pierced his side under the right arm. The spear had to be cut out to remove the barbed prongs; he lost a great quantity of blood and made for Cooktown. Mr Nott was under the care of Dr Kortüm, and was improving.<sup>307</sup> Ebenezer Nott was an old Bundaberg man. Saltwater Creek, where Eb Nott was speared, was the hottest spot in Queensland for dangerous blacks. Amongst the Saltwater Creek myalls were a number of old bêche-de-mer boys, who had enough civilisation to know how weak white men were.<sup>308</sup>

The police received intelligence that the Hell's Gate blacks had killed and eaten two Chinese travellers, and Sub-Inspector Brooke had gone to investigate the matter.<sup>309</sup>

The Commissioner of Police has received information from the Walsh that two men, James John Morgan and Richard George Bailey, were brutally murdered. Both their skulls were smashed in by their two blackboys named Toby and Charley, who cleared with two horses, saddles and bridles, two fancy waistbelts, some silver, and rations. The boys belonged to the Tate tribe, and could be identified. The bodies were buried, and the inspector and police magistrate were informed of the tragedy.<sup>310</sup> The two blackboys who murdered Morgan and Bailey at the Walsh River were captured by the native police on 18 October, at the Lynd River. Three detachments of police had been in search of the murderers, but without success, the country was in a frightful state, and they had to return the best way they could after losing some of their horses. The murderers were with the blacks who had been killing Ferguson's cattle forty miles beyond the Walsh River.<sup>311</sup>

## D — PORT DOUGLAS.

Irvinebank. A black known by the name of Soldier, alias Policeman, had three gins, to whom Billy paid rather marked attention. This annoyed Policeman who obtained a Snider rifle and shot Billy in the side. The unfortunate victim died. Policeman took to the bush and has not since been seen or heard of. It was alleged that he was one of the three blacks who speared Joseph Schollar<sup>312</sup> about two years ago at the Western. Inspector Nichols investigated the matter.<sup>313</sup>

On or about 3 July, information was received from Smithfield, that at J Fallon's selection a raid had been made by the blacks. One cow was speared, and two others besides one horse were also missing. A mob of Aboriginals were suddenly come upon by the proprietor and being taken by surprise quickly decamped, leaving behind them their spears, &c. Mr James Jamieson, manager and proprietor of the Mount Buchan estate, Double Island, Cairns District also found the blacks on their selections very numerous and troublesome. His homestead was not safe to leave unless well protected by occupants.<sup>314</sup>

<sup>306</sup> Brisbane Courier 29 August 1884 p 5.

<sup>307</sup> Brisbane Courier 30 August 1884 p 5. Capricornian 6 September 1884 p 22.

<sup>308</sup> Queensland Figaro 6 September 1884 p 19.

<sup>309</sup> Morning Bulletin 23 October 1884 p 5.

<sup>310</sup> Brisbane Courier 25 September 1884 p 5.

<sup>311</sup> Brisbane Courier 7 November 1884 p 5. QLD PG Vol. XXI] 25 October 1884 [No., p 234.

<sup>312</sup> Morning Bulletin 8 February 1884 p 3. Sculler, see page 101 above.

<sup>313</sup> Morning Bulletin 8 February 1884 p 3.

<sup>314</sup> Cairns Post 3 July 1884 p 2.

A telegram received on 4 August 1884 by the Colonial Secretary reported that a man named Jack Regan, living on Mr MacManus's selection, Russell River, was missing, supposed killed by the blacks.<sup>315</sup>

John Conway, a settler on the Russell River, was reported to be missing, and feared killed by the blacks. Great dissatisfaction was felt in the district at the neglect of the native police stationed here. The Barron blacks were exceedingly troublesome.<sup>316</sup> The mystery surrounding the disappearance of John Conway from McManus' selection on the Russell River was cleared away by information obtained by Mr Mackey, a selector on that river, which left little doubt that Conway was murdered by the blacks. Mr Mackey reported that he captured a blackboy, known to the settlers by the name of Sandy, who, after being detained by him for over a day, confessed that "blackfellow Paddy killed white fellow," meaning Conway. An Aboriginal called Paddy was known to have been working for Conway. On the information furnished by Sandy, Mr Mackey, in company with another man and Sandy, proceeded to search for the body without success. Sandy escaped from them, reducing the chance of finding the body in the dense scrub that abounds in this part. On 10 August, Sub-Inspector Carr and five native troopers arrived in Cairns, and on 12 August proceeded to the Russell to assist in the search.<sup>317</sup> On 17 August, Sub-Inspector Carr returned to Cairns after an absence of six days, and reported that he had found the remains of the missing man, and that from the marks on the body the deceased had evidently been stoned to death. After burying the remains, he continued his investigations and was able to trace the deed to four Aboriginals who were well known. The four blacks concerned in the crime fled to the hills, but were expected to be captured. The reason for the crime was partly traceable to revenge for treatment by Conway, who had been cautioned by settlers to be more circumspect in his dealings with the blacks, but he ignored the advice, and had paid the penalty with his life.<sup>318</sup>

Ernest Carr, Sub-Inspector, Barron River native police provided the following report on Conway:

Immediately on hearing that John Conway was missing from a selector close to the Russell River, and was supposed to have been killed by the blacks, I proceeded to that place, and with the assistance of Russell River tribe, found the dead body of Conway, who had been murdered by four blacks, all of whom are well known to the settlers in the neighbourhood. From all appearances, the deceased had been killed with stones which were found all round his body. I had the remains of Conway buried up a rocky gorge, about half a mile from his hut. The four blacks who were concerned in the murder cleared out for the mountains and my troopers found it impossible to come up with them, as they (the murderers) were expecting to be followed kept as much as possible in rough country. On making enquiry through the blacks, I was informed by them that Conway went with the tribe into the bush, and when returning to his hut tried to take one of the Aboriginal women with him. This action on his part caused the owner of the gin to throw a stone at Conway which hit him on the back of the head and knocked him down, when the other three blacks helped to stone him to death. I made enquiry with the blacks and have not the slightest hesitation in saying that Conway was solely to blame for his untimely end.<sup>319</sup>

Herberton 12 September. The blacks speared a man named John Wild, a miner, in the arm while lying in his bunk, and then robbed his hut. This was the first case of the kind this season and was discouraging to the outside miners. On 17 September, Sub-Inspector William Nichols and his

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<sup>315</sup> Brisbane Courier 5 August 1884 p 4. QSA Item ID847127, 84/5441.

<sup>316</sup> Brisbane Courier 7 August 1884 p 5.

<sup>317</sup> Cairns Post 14 Aug 1884 p 3.

<sup>318</sup> Cairns Post 21 August 1884 p 3.

<sup>319</sup> QSA ITM847137 DR78041, 84/7964.

troopers left for Highfields where the blacks were committing depredations. At Scrubby Creek, they robbed several settlers.<sup>320</sup>

The blacks showed up on the grass hills opposite to Rosedale, on the Upper Daintree, and stole a few iron wedges before they were hunted away. At Mr Waterston's selection, close to the Daintree Heads, they dispersed his cattle and slaughtered some valuable beasts, as well as a horse. The Colonial Secretary was petitioned to establish a native police station on the Daintree as it was badly needed.<sup>321</sup>

A magisterial enquiry touching the death of Aboriginals near Irvinebank, on or about 18 October, commenced at Irvinebank on 23 October.

George William Seaman deposed he was a clerk in the employ of John Moffatt and Co., at Irvinebank. On Friday, 17 October, he saw the troopers out again; they camped on a creek, and were walking about all afternoon. He saw troopers on Saturday. Mr Nichols and another were about during the day the troopers were about. At nightfall, he noticed one of the troopers bringing five or six horses with saddles on into the camp. About 8 o'clock on the same night, a man named Sedgwick told witness that he had heard five or six rifle shots fired. On the Sunday morning following, a blackfellow named Alicky told witness that he had been with the troopers to a blacks' camp where two gins, a piccaninny and a blackfellow were shot or otherwise killed by the troopers. After breakfast Messrs J Moffatt, Peter Moffatt, Linedale, Dineen and witness were piloted by Alicky to a camp where they saw the remains of two gins, a piccaninny and a blackfellow. The blackfellow was known in the camp as King Billy. He had been about the Silver Camp and Irvinebank for months past. Witness also recognised the body of one of the gins, who was in the habit of knocking about Tate's public-house. The bodies were all partially burned. One gin was unrecognisable, but there was sufficient of the remains to show that there had been two gins and a picaninny. The lower extremities were destroyed by fire. The bodies appeared to have been drawn together; some logs and bushes piled on them and then set fire to. Witness noticed bullet marks on two or three trees in the vicinity, and out of one of them extracted the bullet produced. He found one of the pairs of handcuffs, produced, about 200 yards from the bodies, and found the other pair, produced, close to the bodies. The cartridge case, also produced, was within a few feet of them. He found a woomera and spear close to the tree from which the bullet was extracted. Also found a shield, partially burned, lying close to the bodies. On 22 October witness went up to the camp in company with Constable Moroney. The bodies were much more burned and very much decomposed. The fire was burning when he first saw the bodies, but was not burning when seen in company with constable Moroney. On 23 October, he visited the spot where the bodies were lying and found a heap of ashes and the fire burning. When first the bodies were seen, they had not been dead more than 12 or 14 hours. He had seen one of gins on the previous day at Tate's public house. He did not take notice of any wounds, but fancied the head of one of the gins had been smashed in. Around the camp were pieces of old blankets, such as were distributed to the blacks. Believed the name of one of the gins was Kitty, and knew that she was the mother of a blackboy, Tate has with his pack horses. Mr John Moffatt also gave evidence which corroborated the previous witness in every particular. The enquiry was then adjourned.

The adjourned enquiry was resumed at Herberton, on 1 November.

Constable Moroney deposed that on 22 October he visited the scene of the reported murder of the blacks near Irvinebank, and had seen something like the remains of four Aboriginals, partly destroyed by fire. He visited the place the next day in company with Dr Bowkett, Mr Moffatt, Mr Seaman and Sergeant Breene, when he saw nothing but a heap of ashes.

Dr Bowkett deposed that he accompanied the police magistrate and others to a hill about two miles from Irvinebank, and was there shown a heap of ashes, still smouldering. Was informed that human bodies had been burnt there. Examined the heap and found some small bone, but was unable to identify them as human bones; they being so much charred.

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<sup>320</sup> Cairns Post 18 September 1884 p 3.

<sup>321</sup> Brisbane Courier 26 September 1884 p 3.

The enquiry was further adjourned.

The hearing of the enquiry was continued at Irvinebank on 12 November. J C Sedgwick deposed that he heard shots fired on Saturday evening, and had an idea what the shooting was for.

Alessandro Leoni deposed that he heard shots fired and heard screams. He afterwards saw the dead bodies of four Aboriginals.

The enquiry then terminated, and the evidence was forwarded to the Attorney-General.<sup>322</sup>

## **E — TOWNSVILLE.**

The Commissioner of Police has received a telegram from Sub-Inspector Ahearn, that about 4 o'clock on the morning of 26 March a poor blind black boy, who has been employed for fifteen years on a station near Muttaburra, was attacked in his hut by two blacks belonging to the district tribe. He was cut and frightfully maimed by his assailants. A further telegram stated the unfortunate boy died from the effects of his wounds. A constable and three black trackers started in pursuit of the murderers.<sup>323</sup>

Sub-Inspector Meldrum held an inquiry into the shooting affray at Homestead, Charters Towers Region. A black tracker in the police at Homestead was enticed to the blacks' camp there, and his uniform taken from him by the tribe. Constable Savage visited the blacks' camp to recover the uniform, when the blacks set on him with nulla nullas and boomerangs. The constable in self-defence fired and shot one black through the thigh. Sub-Inspector Meldrum suspended the constable pending further inquiry.<sup>324</sup> Dismissal, Constable Savage, James, Reg. No. 502; 15 May 1884.<sup>325</sup>

## **G — GEORGETOWN.**

The attack on Mr Ernest Henry:

On 15 January, at the Argylla copper mines, fifty miles from Cloncurry, a mob of blacks were with me, some of whom had been helping me to clear the track between Cloncurry and Argylla. I was bringing up a horse when a blackfellow drove a heavy spear into my back and immediately closed with me. I was unarmed, and owing to being partially paralysed from the wound, and faint with the loss of blood, I had a desperate struggle to free myself. When I got free the black decamped. The rest of the mob were standing near, but would not assist the one who assaulted me, though he yelled to them to do so. For four days and nights I lay in the same camp, helpless, the blacks watching over me and doing all they could for me. Now, I think all just persons will agree with me, considering the treatment I received from the others, that it was better, my would-be murderer should go free than that any innocent black should be sacrificed by attempting vengeance on the guilty one. I have therefore sent no requisition to the native police. I have since reached Cloncurry, bringing as many blacks as chose to come, to reward them for their loyalty to me. The only reason I can assign for the attack is that I had stopped the man's rations because he would not work. I had treated others the same and have always acted in like manner towards them, feeding only those who work for me.<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>322</sup> Cairns Post 20 November 1884 p 2; Brisbane Courier 12 December 1884 p 5 & Telegraph 13 December 1884 p 4 & The Week 20 December 1884 p 22 & Queenslander 20 December 1884 p 992. Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia 1788-1930 Newcastle: University of Newcastle, 2017-2022, <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.13/1340762> (accessed 27/06/2024). See page 24 above.

<sup>323</sup> Telegraph 28 March 1884 p 2. Week 5 April 1884 p 18.

<sup>324</sup> Northern Miner 2 May 1884 p 2.

<sup>325</sup> Qld PG Vol. XXI] 24 May 1884 [No. 11, p 117.

<sup>326</sup> Brisbane Courier 29 January 1884 p 4. Clem Lack, 'Henry, Ernest (1837–1919)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/henry-ernest-3754/text5853>, published first in hardcopy 1972, accessed online 7 October 2020.

January 21, at Normanton a man known as George Foster was murdered by the blacks twelve miles from the junction of the Georgetown and Cloncurry Road. There were two severe gashes in the jaws made by a tomahawk and four stabs in the throat by a knife.<sup>327</sup>

July 22, Mr MacDonald galloped into Cloncurry with the news that a wounded blackboy came to his camp and related a sad tale that his master, Mr James Powell, and himself, while out mustering on a run between Dougald and Leichhardt were attacked by blacks at night. Mr Powell, after being speared, tried to fire his revolver, but the weapons being out of order would not go off. When the blackboy made his escape, he distinctly heard the blacks chopping Powell with tomahawks. Inspector Urquhart and his troopers started on 23 July for the scene of the murder.<sup>328</sup>

19/84

N.M. Police Office  
Cloncurry  
August 21, 1884

Sub-Inspector Ahern  
Muttaburra

With reference to the recent murder by blacks of Mr J W Powell of Calton Hills, Gunpowder Creek, I have the honour to report as follows - I received information of the murder at 3 p.m. on 21 July - I immediately had the horses mustered and shod and left here at 9 a.m. on the 22nd with six 6 trooper and thirteen 13 horses - I was also accompanied by Mr A Kennedy the late Mr Powell's partner - I was obliged to pack out a large quantity of rations as I was informed by Mr Kennedy that there were none at the station - On 23 July, I passed Mr MacDonald's station on Cameron Creek, where I picked up the wounded blackboy who had escaped from Mr Powell's camp when the attack was made upon it. The boy had been only slightly wounded by a spear in the back and being sufficiently recovered to allow of his riding a quiet horse, I took him on with me - On 29 July, I reached the scene of the murder which I estimate is distant from Cloncurry 200 miles, Carl Creek 80 miles, Kamilaroi 60 miles, Calton Hills 50 miles and is situated on Mistake Creek, ~~or western~~ an eastern tributary of Gunpowder Creek, which latter is ~~an easte~~ western tributary of the Leichhardt River - I there found Mr Powell's body, which owing to the cold weather was in a good state of preservation and was identified without difficulty both by Mr Kennedy and myself. The body was naked and lying on its back, the left arm and shoulder were shattered, the bones above and below the left eye were broken and the neck was broken, and the head doubled up under the shoulders - The body had also been opened down the front and the inside taken out. The blackboy stated to me on the ground that Mr Powell and he were driving straggling cattle home from Kamilaroi and that when a few miles from this spot at dinner time, they met the blacks who appeared very friendly - Mr Powell gave them bread and meat and a lot of tobacco and two of the men stayed with them to help them drive the cattle through some rough gorges during the afternoon - It appears that the remainder of the mob must have followed on behind and watched Mr Powell's camp through the night as the blackboy goes on to state that about 3 hours before daylight, he was awakened by hearing Mr Powell call out "Look out Jack". He jumped up and saw Mr Powell surrounded by blacks with a revolver in his hand which would not go off - He bolted into the bush receiving a spear in the back as he did so. He subsequently looked back from some rising ground and saw blacks dancing round the campfire and heard them beating the body of Mr Powell with clubs - He then travelled as fast as he could for the station which he reached on the third day - An examination of the tracks showed that the blacks followed the boy a considerable distance but for some reason abandoned the pursuit - I buried Mr Powells body, and marked a tree at the head of the grave as shewn in the margin + [cross] P July 13.84. According to my calculation July 13, was the date of the murder - On the morning of the thirtieth 30<sup>th</sup>, I started on the tracks of the blacks and as they had driven the horses and cattle with them it was very easy to follow their trail although the country traversed was mountainous and extremely rough. We passed through ten 10 camps in all, of which cattle had been killed and, in some cases, yards made to hold them - After travelling twenty miles, we dropped into a deep gorge in Gunpowder Creek and there detected the smoke of a camp fire curling upwards - An hour before sundown, I had my troopers in ambush round the

<sup>327</sup> QSA ITM2726696 DR91086. Morning Bulletin 22 January 1884 p 3.

<sup>328</sup> Brisbane Courier 23 July 1884 p 5, 15 August 1884 p 5 & 22 August 1884 p 5. Morning Bulletin 23 October 1884 p 6.

camp which was a very large one there being apparently upwards of one hundred and fifty blacks in it. Trooper Billy acting on my orders summoned them to surrender in their own language but they resisted and as further hesitation would have involved the escape of the offenders and possibly the destruction of my little party, I gave the order to fire and thirty 30 of the blacks were shot. Trooper Larry was knocked down by a black but beyond this I have no casualties to report – Many blacks escaped but my detachment was not strong enough to admit of my doing more - In the camp, I recovered seven 7 horses, 2 riding saddles one 1 pack saddle, a shotgun, a revolver, cartridges, tobacco, blankets, clothing and all Mr Powell's camp equipment - They had killed all the cattle with the exception of five 5 head which were too footsore and knocked up to drive home with us so had to be left - I subsequently patrolled up the western branch of the Leichardt River across the divide and down the Wills to Teddington Lock<sup>329</sup> - I had hoped that there I might meet the Burke River Detachment but I heard nothing of them - Between the scene of the murder and the head of the Wills, I broke up and dispersed four 4 more large mobs of blacks one of which I was informed by the gins had been watching Mulligans prospecting camp on the Leichardt for some days with a view to making an attack upon it, and as they were within a mile of that camp when I came upon them, I think it probably that such was their intention. I cautioned Mr Mulligan to be very careful and I do not think that he will neglect any precautions - I returned to Barracks on the 18th inst. and reported myself on the 19th - The horses have suffered much through losing shoes in the mountains and doing long stages with insufficient grass and water and now require a spell – The trip was a most arduous one and hard tramping on foot amongst mountains. On a short allowance to rations told considerable on myself & my troopers but I think the blacks have had a caution which will exercise a deterrent effect upon them for some time to come. F Urquhart Sub-Inspector<sup>330</sup>

On 20 August 1884, Reginald Uhr, PM held an Inquest of Death on James W Powell, Court House Cloncurry.<sup>331</sup>

Michael Byrne wired the Commissioner of Police from Georgetown, 10 June 1884, as follows:

Ah Hing reported, about 1 pm 9 June 1884 that at 8 am Jah Lin was speared by blacks in a garden ten miles from Georgetown and died about an hour after being speared. Sergeant Byrne proceeded to where the body lay and found wounds near neck on the right shoulder, two spear wounds through the right arm, one spear wound in the right side, and one spear wound in the left thigh. A quantity of blood was found on the ground under the body of deceased. The blacks entered the garden, took potatoes, melons, &c., from the dwellinghouse, as well as blankets and other articles. The police tracked the blacks in the sand to the Etheridge River, where they are camped for some time. Inspector Thompson and troopers left with the gold escort yesterday morning.<sup>332</sup>

# 1885

D DIVISION — COOKTOWN.

Cooktown, January 2. An Aboriginal speared a black gin this morning in the head and killed her. The police pursued him but lost sight of him near a church and were searching for him.<sup>333</sup>

Maytown, January 6. Telegrams have been received from the Walsh River stating that over 200 blacks had surrounded Messrs Anderson and Skene's Northern Park station, and after a severe

<sup>329</sup> A station on the North Gregory, Boulia, via Cork and Witton.

<sup>330</sup> QSA ITM665853 DR1114274. Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia 1788-1930 (accessed 16/03/2022).

<sup>331</sup> QSA ITM2727005 DR101090; ITM847126 DR78013, 84/5070.

<sup>332</sup> QSA ITM2726879 DR91269. Queenslander 14 June 1884 p 925.

<sup>333</sup> Queenslander 10 January 1885 p 41.

fight the whites gave way, and had to barricade themselves in the station. One boy was dangerously speared. The telegrams were supplemented by the arrival here of one of the station hands.<sup>334</sup>

Four Aboriginals were arrested at Maytown on their way to the Gulf and from a gunshot wound in the hand of one of them, it was feared that some outrage had been committed. Inquiries showed that they ran away from Watson's station on the Kennedy, and they would be brought up on 8 January charged with the theft of a gun and revolvers, which were found in their possession. Inspector White arrived from Palmerville to remove them.<sup>335</sup>

Mr E Corr, of Bashford and Co., railway contractors, was speared by the blacks while journeying on horseback within five miles of the Normanby diggings. There were about a dozen myalls in the bush and Mr Corr was looking for timber when the spear "whished" through his left side. Mrs Williams came upon Mr Corr after he had ridden three miles with the spear protruding from his back; she broke it off straight. Afterwards, Wallace and the police came up and cleared the myalls, while an express was sent for Dr Kortüm. The doctor returned to Cooktown on 12 February, after an aggravating operation, and he was optimistic about the patient's recovery.<sup>336</sup>

*The Cooktown Independent* reported that the blacks made another raid on Harry Jones, spearing and roasting several valuable cows. Four civilians—all experienced bushmen—surprised about 120 myalls in their camp near Koolburra, and found the carcase of a cow splendidly broiled between two sheets of bark raised on stones above a log fire. As usual, the police were reposing at the Laura. A correspondent, however, asserts that Jones kept only one white and two black protectors on his station, where at least half a dozen good bushmen were required. At King's Plains, too, one horse and two bullocks were speared and eaten, and on the Endeavour and McIvor the settlers were compelled to keep their cartridges dry and their rifles ready. The wet season drives the blacks to extremes, and it was a disgrace that no government provision was made for feeding and civilising the children of the soil. Every wet season, the settlers were losing their best horses and their fattest cattle, while the useless native police were parading along the main roads when the sun was out. It was ridiculous to expect that when men found their best bullocks roasting in savage camps, they could refrain from sending in a leaden retribution; the murders were recorded not against the defenders of their property, but against those who accept rents and taxes for a protection which they never granted.<sup>337</sup>

H St. George, PM wired the Under Colonial Secretary on 17 April 1885 as follows:

Chinaman speared on 14<sup>th</sup> at right branch Palmer making eight speared within twelve months, four fatally. Chinamen are being driven from all outside workings where they get most gold, native police protection urgently required.

Inspector Fitzgerald, Cooktown wired on 30 April 1885 the Police Commissioner as follows:

Re your telegram yesterday, I was on the Palmer branch day after occurrence. Cannibal (Creek) police escorted wounded man forty miles to Maytown hospital. I also sent special for (Sub-Inspector) White, on the spot two days after, matter was promptly attended to, again instructed to patrol there. The Chinese in these localities are in a deplorable state of destitution, no rain fallen; can you relieve their necessity with rice, prevent starvation.<sup>338</sup>

<sup>334</sup> Brisbane Courier 7 January 1885 p 6.

<sup>335</sup> Queenslander 10 January 1885 p 41.

<sup>336</sup> QSA ITM847145 DR78059, 85/790. Brisbane Courier 18 February 1885 p 5. Queenslander 21 February 1885 p 281.

<sup>337</sup> Brisbane Courier 23 March 1885 p 3. Darling Downs Gazette 23 March 1885 p 3. Refer to pp 30 & 143.

<sup>338</sup> QSA ITM847153 DR78077, 85/3031.

Maytown, April 20. On the 16th, a Chinaman named Ah Gow was brought into the hospital speared by the blacks about ten miles below Cannibal Creek on the main road to Byerstown. He was working in what was known as the right branch of the Palmer River. Dr Spellini<sup>339</sup> succeeded in abstracting the barbed portion of the spear, about 8in. in length. The weapon entered the left side, injuring some of the internal organs. The man was in a critical state. Sub-Inspector White started in pursuit on the 17th.<sup>340</sup>

Within the last twelve months, eight Chinese miners on the Fine Gold and Stoney Creeks were speared and eaten by the savages, and a large number of horses were destroyed. Europeans and Chinese were driven from the rich reefs on the Mitchell. In recent times, no less than 10 horses belonging to Chinese packers on the right-hand branch of the Palmer were killed and eaten. The memorialists asked that a small detachment of native police be stationed on the St George or Mitchell Rivers.<sup>341</sup>

On 10 June, M H Poole received a telegram from Mr G Massey that his brother, Charles Eyre Massey, had been speared by the blacks and requesting him to send his buggy at once, which was immediately done. The unfortunate young man was speared on their station, Lallah Rookh, about 150 miles from the Laura. Fortunately, his brother Gerald met Dr Spellini at the Laura, who was a passenger by the coach for Cooktown, and secured his services to treat the speared man.<sup>342</sup>

When Mr Nicholson of Strathleven Station, Mitchell River, reported to Mr G Massey that he had seen fresh black tracks up river, Messrs Massey Bros. with Mr De Laure and a blackboy went out in search and found several bullocks speared, cut up, and some cooked. The blacks then made tracks for the scrub, with a large quantity of spears. Mr C E Massey approaching the scrub sheltered behind a tree, when, not suspecting blackfellows, he turned slightly round and received a spear through the left shoulder. His comrades came immediately to his rescue and removed him to the station, when his brother proceeded in all haste to the Laura for help, where he secured the services of Dr Spellini, who on arrival extracted the spear, which had penetrated about 10 inches, and pierced the left lung. The poor young man suffered greatly. The wound was too serious; he expired on 12 June and was buried on 14 June. When the sad news reached Cooktown, nearly every hotel in town and the ships in harbour hoisted their flags half-mast. Great sympathy was expressed for his parents, who, not long ago lost another son, who died from the effects of a fall from his horse. Three days after Massey was speared, Sub-Inspector Charles Marrett was in the locality with his troopers. Sub-Inspector Marrett remained with him until he died and read the burial service over his remains. About twenty troopers scoured the country in search of the blacks who, besides spearing poor Massey, speared a large number of cattle.<sup>343</sup>

The disappearance from the Four-mile Hotel of George Woods on 8 March was considered most mysterious. Two detachments of fourteen troopers, with two officers, were sent on 16 March to continue the search.<sup>344</sup> From information received from the blacks, Inspector Fitzgerald and his troopers went to the Annan River on 8 August and found part of the remains of George Woods. The remains were identified by a boot and sock. He was speared by the blacks and carried to a creek running into the Annan River.<sup>345</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> See Pugh's Almanac 1885 p 186 for the correct spelling.

<sup>340</sup> Brisbane Courier 2 May 1885 p 3

<sup>341</sup> QSA ITM847184 DR78147, 86/552.

<sup>342</sup> Capricornian 13 June 1885 p 20.

<sup>343</sup> Morning Bulletin 18 June 1885 p 5.

<sup>344</sup> Northern Miner 16 March 1885 p 2 & Morning Bulletin 19 March 1885 p 5.

<sup>345</sup> Queenslander 8 August 1885 p 201. QSA ITM2727613 DR101805.

Telegram from Maytown dated October 26:

On Monday last a Chinese-packer lost ten horses near Granite Creek, he got lost looking for them, but was found on the following Friday night in a famishing condition. The police arrived on the scene on Friday. A party of Chinese saw horse tracks and also a large mob of blacks on the trail. Two horses were killed within two miles of the camp. Two returned and the rest were driven off and killed in the mountains.<sup>346</sup>

On November 8, the blacks threatened an attack on the Armbrust Hotel at the Normanby. A special train was engaged by Inspector Fitzgerald, who proceeded with two detachments of native police, and found the blacks camped in large numbers in the vicinity. They had come from Hell's Gates because of the unprecedented drought. The blacks belonged to a very dangerous and hostile tribe.<sup>347</sup>

The Commissioner for Police received a telegram from Cooktown, stating that three Chinamen had been murdered by blacks at Stewart Town, below Palmerville. The police buried the bodies, and Sub-Inspector B Stafford, with the Glenroy detachment, was making further investigations.<sup>348</sup> James Adams reported to the Palmerville police that he found two dead Chinamen lying in the river at Stewart Town. Constable Murphy, who was in Maytown, left at 2 pm on 27 November, and on the 30th reported to Sub-Inspector William Britton, by wire that he had visited the scene of the outrage, and found three bodies of Chinamen who had been speared. Five spears were sticking in the bodies, while nine holes marked the places where other spears had been. The men appeared to have been dead about eight or ten days. Sub-Inspector Stafford at once went on the trail of the murderers. An intelligent Chinese, who spoke good English, saw the bodies and reported that the hands and legs were cut off and carried away.<sup>349</sup>

#### D — PORT DOUGLAS.

Cairns, January 12. A Chinaman working at the Pyramid plantation, on the Mulgrave River, was attacked by five blacks. His cries brought several of his fellow countrymen to his rescue, but shortly afterwards about 100 blacks appeared, and assuming a defiant attitude, challenged the Chinamen to fight. Mr Loridan, manager of the Pyramid plantation, arrived shortly afterwards with assistance, and the blacks then cleared out. Fears were entertained that unless protection was afforded by the native police, the settlers in self-defence would take the law into their own hands.<sup>350</sup>

Cairns, January 7. Inspector Carr, with five troopers, proceeded to Double Island, where fresh outrages by the blacks were reported. Reports were also received from the Russell River of the pillaging of surveyor Munro's camp of a large stock of rations.<sup>351</sup>

Surveyor Fitzgerald reported that during the time he was on the Russell in late 1884, his camp was attacked three times by the blacks. This occurred twice during the night, and once by daylight, when a large mob of them advanced upon the survey party with spears, swords, shields, &c. Without firearms to defend themselves with the whole camp would have been murdered.<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> Morning Bulletin 5 November 1885 p 5.

<sup>347</sup> Brisbane Courier 11 November 1885 p 5.

<sup>348</sup> Telegraph 1 December 1885 p 4.

<sup>349</sup> Morning Bulletin 17 December 1885 p 5.

<sup>350</sup> Brisbane Courier 13 January 1885 pp 4 & 6. Darling Downs Gazette 14 January 1885 p 3.

<sup>351</sup> Queenslander 10 January 1885 p 41.

<sup>352</sup> The Capricornian 7 Feb 1885 p 21.

Since the departure of Sub-Inspector Carr, a native trooper stationed on the Johnstone, has come to Cairns and reported that four Chinamen were speared by the blacks there.<sup>353</sup>

Cairns. Late on Christmas Eve, Donald Shaw, who worked for McAulay, reported to the police that Donald McAulay, selector, was missing, a victim of the blacks. Inspector Carr was en route for the Mulgrave River, in search of the murderers of McAulay. A troop from Herberton was also expected.<sup>354</sup>

Magisterial inquiry, December 30. An inquiry was opened into the death of Donald McAulay, a selector, on the Mulgrave River. Thomas Ryan was the first witness called and deposed:

I am a contractor residing on deceased's selection. I knew Donald McAulay. He was a selector residing on the Mulgrave River. I last saw him on Sunday, the 21<sup>st</sup> inst., about 7.30 am He left the camp that morning for McPherson's selection in a blackfellow's canoe, accompanied by two blackfellows named Charley Daylight and Tommy. I saw them start, and about an hour afterwards, Tommy returned to the camp on foot. I asked him what he had done with the canoe, and he said that another blackfellow had taken his place in it, and it had gone on. Next day Tommy came back again, and I asked him what had become of the white fellow and canoe. He said white fellow left canoe at Yarramaburra, meaning McPherson's selection, and went along the track to town. This was on Monday, and I became uneasy that McAulay did not return and had my suspicions aroused that he had met with foul play. On Tuesday, two blacks came in a canoe and were very impudent, and two more came on the opposite side of the inlet armed with spears, which was very unusual. When they saw I was armed, they went behind the mangrove. When Shaw came home to dinner, I told him the particulars of what had happened, and he agreed to go with me in search of McAulay on the following day. On Wednesday Donald Shaw and I started up the river and had not gone above three-quarters of a mile when we came upon the canoe that McAulay left in. We went ashore and saw two blackfellows, one of them Tommy, whom we took into the boat and proceeded up the river. About a quarter of a mile further on we saw Charley Daylight on the bank. As we passed, he called to the blacks in the boat in broken English to know if we had firearms, and when they told him we had, he bolted up the bank and called out to those in the boat to leave us. This we prevented them doing, and went on to McPherson's, but finding McAulay had not been there we proceeded to Mr Adams', where Shaw got a horse and came into town to report the matter to the police. When we went ashore at McPherson's we rolled our firearms in a mackintosh, owing to the rain, and put them under a sheet of iron, but whilst we were there the two blacks cleared out, and our firearms disappeared with them. On Thursday Shaw returned with Constable Portley and a black tracker. We remained that day at McPherson's, expecting the blacks to come into camp again. Next morning two blacks, Tommy and Sambo, now in Court, came to the camp. We detained them, and Shaw, Constable Portley, McKay, myself, a kanaka, and three blacks went down the river in the boat. After we had proceeded about a mile, we discovered the dead body of McAulay in the river and towed it to a sandpit. When we found the body, the head was nearly severed from the trunk, the entrails were out, and one leg was missing. When the blacks saw the body, they tried to escape; Tommy succeeded but was afterwards recaptured. We took the body back to McPherson's, and had it buried next day. The two boys who went in the canoe with McAulay were Aboriginal natives of the Mulgrave River. McAulay never did any harm to the blacks, but always treated them very kindly. There are no gins about the camp on the Mulgrave. About three weeks ago, I travelled down the Mulgrave with Charley Daylight, and he seemed quite inoffensive. I could not recognise the features of the body as those of McAulay, they being so decomposed. By the Bench: The blacks were in the habit of coming to the selection with fish but were not allowed to remain about the place for long. Charley Daylight was one of the most civilised blacks on the river. McAulay had no firearms with him. We requested him to take some, but he would not.

Donald Shaw deposed: I am a bushman engaged on McAulay's selection. I heard the evidence given by the previous witness, the particulars of which as stated by him are correct.

<sup>353</sup> Cairns Post 1 October 1885 p 2. Queenslander 13 March 1886 p 427.

<sup>354</sup> Cairns Post 1 January 1885 p 2.

Alexander McKay deposed: I am a selector operating on the Mulgrave River. I last saw deceased about three weeks ago. I remember Shaw and Ryan coming to my selection on Wednesday the 24th and enquiring about McAulay. On learning he had not been there, they left for Mr Adams to report the matter. On the 25th Shaw, Ryan, the constable, and tracker returned, and on the 30th I went down the river with them and the two black boys (in Court) and my kanaka, in search of McAulay. We found the dead body of McAulay lying on the fork of a tree, partly in the water. The left leg and left arm were cut off, and the head was almost severed from the body. We had to get a bag to remove the body. My kanaka first drew attention to the body, and one of the blacks wanted to make believe it was an alligator, and both were evidently anxious to pass it by. When we would go to it, they exhibited great fear. They both tried to escape, and Tommy did so. We took the body back with us and interred it at my place on Saturday. The body was too decomposed for me to recognise it as McAulay's, but I am convinced that it was his. I have known deceased twenty years. To the best of my knowledge, he has always been kind to the blacks. As a rule, the gins do not come into the camp. The deceased was, I think, about 55 to 60 years of age, and leaves a wife and family residing on the Clarence River, N.S.W. By the Bench: I believe that deceased was murdered by the blacks. Witness then made a statement to the effect that he believed one of the blacks then in Court named Tommy and Charley Daylight were the murderers of John Conway a few months back off the Russell River.

His reason for this suspicion was that these two blacks had come on to the Mulgrave about the time of the murder with new shirts on, which had not been given them so far as he could ascertain by any of the white people. Constable Portley gave corroborative evidence, adding that before anything respecting the death of McAulay had been said to the blacks, Tommy and Sambo, they said it was Charley Daylight and Jimmy Barlow who had done it. On being questioned by the Bench, witness said he did not know if the boys in Court had anything to do with the death of deceased, but they seemed to know all about it. This concluded the evidence, which will be forwarded in due course to the Attorney-General. The evidence of the Aboriginals, although an interpreter was present, was not taken in case they should prove to be parties to the crime.<sup>355</sup>

Port Douglas, March 14. A selector named Johnstone reported the murder of a selector named A S Bernard (aka Barnard) on the Mosman River by the blacks. The Aboriginals came upon Bernard while he was working in company with a kanaka and a Chinaman, both of whom ran into an adjoining selection. Bernard ran into his own house for his gun. Johnstone and a mate went to Bernard's house and found the contents wrecked. In the house, a large pool of blood was found, but no trace of Bernard. They followed the blood into the scrub and searched for the missing man. The impression was that Bernard was murdered and carried away.<sup>356</sup> Port Douglas, March 16. The body of A S Bernard was found near his house. The face was mutilated almost beyond recognition, and the body was covered with spear wounds.<sup>357</sup>

The blacks were constantly annoying the settlers, in particular at Rosedale, on the Upper Daintree by shouting and cooeeing. They killed two bullocks and speared three more, besides driving another dozen about six miles up the river for the same purpose. The blacks were hunted away; the cattle brought back to civilisation; and peace was restored for a few weeks. A party of men who were road-making and hauling timber left their tuckerbag on the river bank after dinner, and two blacks sneaked forward and stole the bag, pannikin, &c.<sup>358</sup>

*Queenslander* 14 February:

It appears that about 8 o'clock on 17 January, a Mrs Leon Cravino (better known as "Old Houghley's daughter") shot dead a black gin and a blackboy, the former 30 years of age, and the

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<sup>355</sup> Cairns Post 1 January 1885 p 2. Note, it is unclear what happened to Charley Daylight and Tommy. QSA ITM2727177 DR101262. QPG 1885 p 76.

<sup>356</sup> Toowoomba Chronicle and Darling Downs General Advertiser 17 March 1885 p 2.

<sup>357</sup> Darling Downs Gazette 18 March 1885 p 2. QSA ITM847148 DR78067, 85/1784; ITM2727360 DR87595.

<sup>358</sup> Brisbane Courier 9 January 1885 p 6.

latter aged 11. The gin was shot through the left breast, and the boy in the head. The neighbours heard five shots fired. The circumstance happened in Mrs Cravino's house. At the time, another blackboy (said to be the son of the deceased gin) escaped uninjured. The woman stated that she only fired off the revolver to unload it and that one shot caused both deaths, the whole affair being an accident. It would seem that the three blacks had been in her employ for some time, and were accustomed to stay in the house. Some of the spectators who saw the bodies as they lay ankle-deep in blood, described it as a horrible sight and affirmed that the two Aboriginals could not have been killed by the one shot. But, be this as it may, the woman appeared quite unconcerned as to the mischief she has done, and chatted about it in a very volatile manner, so much so, indeed, that many were inclined to the belief that she cannot be right in her head. Mrs Mary Hannah Cravino was committed for trial on the charge of murder. She will be tried at Cooktown on 1 May.<sup>359</sup>

Cooktown Criminal Sittings. The Criminal sittings of the Circuit Court were held at Cooktown, before Mr Justice Cooper on 1 May 1885. Mary Ann Crevion (sic, Mary Hannah Cravino), charged with shooting a black gin and blackboy at Thornborough, was acquitted and discharged.<sup>360</sup>

A mob of blacks surrounded Mr Jamieson's homestead at Double Island, brandishing spears, demanding rations, tobacco, and other luxuries in threatening terms. They dragged the housekeeper to the kitchen, threatening her life; but fortunately, one of the men employed on the estate appeared in the nick of time. The man seized a revolver, and it was not until he had wounded two or three of the assailants that they showed any sign of making themselves scarce; after which they made a raid on the cattle and horses, and succeeded in spearing one horse, which died from the effects of the spear wounds. They also broke into a storeroom which they believed contained provisions, but their disappointment was so great that they chopped up the ropes and sails contained in the store. In their exit from Mount Buchan, they came across Mr Fallon's cattle and speared two of them.<sup>361</sup>

Isaac Henry of the Tully River, wired, on 18 April 1885, the Colonial Secretary:

Blacks on Tully River extremely troublesome have speared one hundred and twenty head of my cattle this year. If assistance is not rendered at once will have to bring cattle into Cardwell, have great fears for safety of self and family. Please render me assistance.<sup>362</sup>

Henry again wrote to the Colonial Secretary on 9 September 1885 advising that "in ten months they (blacks) have killed 69 head of Mr Tyson's and more than 200 of mine." He further advised that the blacks threatened to burn him out and murder his family. In support of these threats, he referred to the cases of Hassall, Scougall and Jacobs, who had all suffered attacks by blacks.<sup>363</sup>

On the Mulgrave, they tomahawked and speared three horses belonging to James Allen, and one of them died. The next day, in the same locality, they killed two cows and calves, after trapping them in artificial pitfalls. Then in May, a calf was killed within half-a-mile of Mr Allen's house; three more head of cattle were killed and the carcasses were taken away, leaving only the heads and hides.<sup>364</sup>

*Northern Standard* of 15 September:

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<sup>359</sup> QSA ITM3818441 DR158896; ITM3818566 DR159313. *Queenslander* 14 February 1885 p 268. *Telegraph* 4 March 1885 p 2.

<sup>360</sup> *Darling Downs Gazette* 6 May 1885 p 3.

<sup>361</sup> *Cairns Post* 16 April 1885 p 2.

<sup>362</sup> QSA ITM847168 DR78110, 85/6952

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>364</sup> *Capricornian* 16 May 1885 p 20.

The blacks in the Johnstone River district appear to have been exceedingly troublesome recently, and their depredations are becoming so serious that additional police protection is urgently required. Yesterday Inspector Morisset received a report from Senior-constable Ryan at Geraldton, stating that on the morning of the 4th instant a bailiff named Charles Hart, employed at Dr Koch's selection on the Johnstone River, reported to him that on the previous day when he returned home from a two days' visit to Geraldton he found that everything in the house had been stolen, and the ground around it strewed with stones, and a Chinaman named Ah Chow, whom he had left in charge, missing. There was no doubt from the tracks and other marks that the outrage was committed by a mob of blacks. Constable Lanigan was at once despatched to the selection with a couple of trackers, but Hart refused to go back, and another man named Herbert took his place, but came back again on the 6th, stating that a mob of blacks came after the trackers had left, and throw stones on the house in which he had taken refuge. Constable Lanigan, in a supplementary report, stated that he went to Koch's selection to search for the missing Chinaman, Ah Chow, taking two trackers along with him. He found the place where the Chinaman had been camped, and also the tracks of the blacks around the house, and stones scattered about. He also saw several holes in the iron roof, which had evidently been broken in with stones. On the morning of the 5th instant, he searched a short distance around the house and found pieces of torn papers and other things strewed about which had been stolen from the house. He found a black's track leading through the scrub and followed for several miles until he met tracks leading in different directions, which the trackers could make no hand of. He saw no blacks and nothing of the Chinaman. He then had to return to Geraldton, as he could not carry any rations. From a private source, we learn that another and even more serious outrage occurred on Thursday last at the camp of Mr Surveyor Boyle near Dr Koch's selection. Mr Boyle's staff consisted of four Europeans and two Chinese, and on the day in question, the camp was surrounded by a large mob of blacks, who commenced to stone the occupants and succeeded in carrying off some of the tents, provisions, and other articles. The fight lasted several hours before the natives were beaten off. Mr Boyle and his men returned to Geraldton, and a party was to be organised to go in pursuit. Our informant states that cattle and horses are constantly being speared in the neighbourhood.<sup>365</sup>

Cairns, 6 October. The blacks fired the cane on Loridan's Pyramid Plantation, and over two hundred acres of cane were destroyed. There was a great outcry here about the insufficiency of the protection from the blacks, as serious depredations had been committed by them all over the district. Sub-Inspector Carr and a party of troopers left in the pilot schooner for the Johnstone to put a stop to the raids in that locality.<sup>366</sup> On October 16, Sub-Inspector Carr and troopers returned to Cairns by the *Sarsfield*, brigantine, from Johnstone River.<sup>367</sup> Carr was ordered to proceed to Pyramid Plantation.<sup>368</sup>

## F — BLACKALL.

Eyre's Creek, Native Police Camp, 17 January 1885:

On 6 January 1885, I received a requisition from Mr Field of Sandringham Station to arrest two Aboriginals for cattle spearing, robbery and other offences. I arrived at Sandringham and arrested them. On 12 January, I started for Birdsville with the prisoners. When about six miles from Sandringham approaching some Giddia (sic, Gidya) scrub, they broke away attacking the troopers by throwing waddies at them. One of them attacked me, striking my horse violently and making him uncontrollable. The troopers then fired on him, killing him. The other bolted further into the timber, followed by one other trooper. On overtaking them, I found he had shot the prisoner, recapture impossible. Sub-Inspector R Little.<sup>369</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> Brisbane Courier 2 October 1885 p 2.

<sup>366</sup> Northern Miner 7 October 1885 p 2.

<sup>367</sup> Cairns Post 22 October 1885 p 2.

<sup>368</sup> QSA ITM847172 DR78121, 85/7997.

<sup>369</sup> QSA ITM847188 DR78157, 86/1598.

## G — GEORGETOWN.

Brisbane, June 4. The Commissioner of Police received a telegram stating the police at Georgetown reported that an old Aboriginal said three white men and two black boys were killed by the blacks at Van Dieman's River about fourteen days ago. The river is thirty miles north of the Norman River and flows into the Gulf of Carpentaria. The party were looking for land.<sup>370</sup>

Normanton, October 21. Patrick Warren aka Paddy Byrne, aged between 60 and 70 years, employed on Mr R W Comley's selection at Walker's Creek, was murdered by a blackfellow known as Billy, who was employed on the same selection. They had both been in Normanton drinking together. On leaving town, Byrne took a bottle of grog with him. The bottle was found empty at the house on the selection. A blackboy reported to Mr Poingdestre's native police camp that Billy had killed Byrne with a pick. The matter was also reported to the police in town. Mr Vivian Williams drove out to the selection and found the body of the murdered man lying outside the slippails. In his back under the shoulder blade, there was an ugly deep wound. Close to the body was found the pick covered in blood. Sergeant Ferguson and a constable were out searching for the murderer.<sup>371</sup> Normanton, October 22. Sergeant Ferguson arrested the Aboriginal Billy and his accomplice, charged with the murder of Patrick Byrne on Comley's selection at Walker's Creek.<sup>372</sup> They arrested Billy and his alleged accomplice near Kimberley and started for Normanton, both prisoners handcuffed. Billy escaped from custody at Walker's Creek. The party then resumed their journey to town with the remaining prisoner. Sub-Inspector Poingdestre, on learning that Billy was at the Norman River, three miles above the telegraph station, proceeded there and intercepted Billy, who promptly jumped into the Norman. He was called upon to return but continued his escape. Police fired on him and he disappeared, whether shot or taken by an alligator (sic, crocodile) was uncertain.<sup>373</sup>

# 1886

## D DIVISION — COOKTOWN.

Maytown, February 5. As a check to the marauding disposition of blacks located in and about Cannibal Creek, Sub-Inspector White and troops formed a temporary camp. A valuable bull, worth £20, the property of John McLean, of Bellevue station, Mitchell River, was speared and eaten by the blacks. Five broken spears were found near a portion of the charred remains of the beast. These periodic raids were said to be made by the Mount Mulligan blacks, near Thornborough, who, after a good feast, retire to their stronghold. The poor Mitchell blacks have to bear the brunt of all the depredations committed in their district.<sup>374</sup>

Inspector Fitzgerald wired the Commissioner for Police from Cooktown that a very serious outrage had taken place near Battle Camp, Palmer coach-road. The hut of a settler named Chiles was ransacked by the blacks, and the two occupants of the place were missing. It was believed that they were killed and eaten by the blacks. Sub-Inspector Marrett proceeded to the scene.<sup>375</sup>

<sup>370</sup> Morning Bulletin 5 June 1885 p 5.

<sup>371</sup> Brisbane Courier 4 November 1885 p 10. QSA ITM2727769 DR101961.

<sup>372</sup> Brisbane Courier 23 October 1885 p 5.

<sup>373</sup> QSA ITM847181 DR78142, 85/9913. Queensland Figaro and Punch 9 January 1886 p 23.

<sup>374</sup> Queenslander 6 March 1886 p 387.

<sup>375</sup> Queenslander 7 August 1886 p 205.

Inspector Fitzgerald advised the Commissioner that the police stationed at Laura found the dead bodies of the two Chinamen who were supposed to have been eaten by the blacks when they ransacked the settler's house near Battle Camp, Palmer coach-road, about a week ago. Sub-Inspector Marrett with his troopers was following the blacks' tracks.<sup>376</sup>

Inspector Fitzgerald advised the Commissioner that the Cape Bedford missionaries reported a large number of natives had collected there who were hostile to the quiet blacks. He ordered Sub-Inspector Brooke to proceed to the missionary station in conjunction with Sub-Inspector Marrett to make arrests if necessary.<sup>377</sup>

## D — PORT DOUGLAS.

Mr T C Allen reported to the police that C H Townsend, on his selection at Cape Gatton, was missing. Sergeant Halloran, four trackers and McLeod left in the pilot cutter to search for Townsend. The sergeant reported that after proceeding about half a mile along the track in the direction of the camp last occupied by Townsend; he came upon the remains of the lost man about twenty yards off the track. From the appearance of the remains, which were the bones of a human being, it was surmised that the unfortunate man must have been dead about a month or six weeks; the skull was battered by a tomahawk. There was little doubt that he was murdered by the blacks, who were extremely numerous in the vicinity. Having collected the remains of the murdered man and buried them, Sergeant Whelan proceeded to trace the perpetrators. Although he found a large number of blacks' camps containing European articles that must have been stolen, he could not discover anything that belonged to Townsend, and so returned to Cairns.<sup>378</sup>

The Aborigines were reported to be troublesome at Cardwell, where constant watchfulness was required to prevent their depredations, but more especially in the neighbourhood of the rivers Murray and Tully, where one settler had three acres of sweet potatoes stolen during his absence for a few days, while others had lost smaller quantities; another had three cows and six calves driven away by the blacks.<sup>379</sup>

The Commissioner for Police was informed by the Port Douglas police concerning the alleged murder of blacks on Mitchell Vale Station, and that Robert Petty, P J Shaw, and a blackboy Davis, were committed for trial for the murder, and also Petty, for shooting at a blackboy named Tommy, with intent to kill.<sup>380</sup> At the Townsville Circuit Court, Robert Petty and an Aboriginal named Davey were charged with shooting three Aboriginals at Mitchell Vale Station, near Port Douglas. The principal witness was Thomas James Shaw, who turned Queen's evidence. The accused were found not guilty. Petty was re-arrested on a charge of shooting with intent.<sup>381</sup>

The following telegram from the Land Commissioner at Geraldton to the Under Secretary for Public Lands, dated 13 December, has kindly been forwarded to us for publication:

Sue Long, storekeeper, north branch Johnstone River, handed me written report stating that on the 1st instant a mob of about 100 blacks, some of whom were armed with rifles, attacked a camp of fourteen Chinamen. The blacks shot one Chinaman dead (Lan Quai), carried another away alive, and severely wounded a third. They stole everything in the camp, including revolver, rifle,

<sup>376</sup> Brisbane Courier 10 August 1886 p 5.

<sup>377</sup> Queenslander 18 September 1886 p 5.

<sup>378</sup> Brisbane Courier 24 February 1886 p 2, 17 March 1886 p 5.

<sup>379</sup> Week 23 October 1886 p 28.

<sup>380</sup> Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 13 September 1886 p 2.

<sup>381</sup> Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 7 May 1887 p 2.

ammunition, and a swag belonging to Mr Clark, the prospector. M O'Donohue, Land Commissioner.<sup>382</sup>

## **E — TOWNSVILLE.**

A blackfellow employed on Macdonald's Conway Station (Port Denison way) was sleeping the other day after his work, when some of his countrymen dragged him out of his bunk, tomahawked him, and hacked off his head.<sup>383</sup>

Paddy and Willis, two Aboriginals charged at Charters Towers on the 14th instant with the murder of an Aboriginal named Billy in April last, were found guilty, the jury adding a strong recommendation to mercy. The sentence of death was passed on the prisoners, who made no reply and appeared quite indifferent.<sup>384</sup> The death sentence was commuted to 10 years' penal servitude.<sup>385</sup>

## **F — BLACKALL.**

It was reported to the Acting Colonial Secretary and the Commissioner for Police that Sub-Inspector R B Sharpe, in charge of native police at Cluney, or Eyre's Creek, committed suicide by shooting himself in the head with a revolver, at Birdsville, on 27 January. An inquiry was held by the police magistrate at Birdsville. Sub-Inspector Sharpe was on his way from Cluney to meet Sub-Inspector Little, to transfer his command. He was to go to Blackall, to receive orders as to his future destination. He was about 43 years of age, of a very genial disposition, and a thoroughly trusted officer.<sup>386</sup>

## **F — WINTON**

The Commissioner for Police has received the following telegram from Sub-Inspector Ahern, Muttaburra:

The Cloncurry police report that Mr Dan Sullivan, manager of Mount Merlin station, was fired at on 9 January by a blackboy named Ben, with intent to murder. The bullet grazed Sullivan's neck. The blackboy has cleared out with two horses and a rifle; it is supposed, for Tambo, of which district he is a native.<sup>387</sup>

Ben (an Aboriginal) was charged, on warrant issued by the Boulia Bench, with shooting at and wounding D O'Sullivan, Mount Merlin Station, on 19 January 1886. There is no description given of him, but he is supposed to have gone to Tambo, 3 March 1886.<sup>388</sup>

The Commissioner for Police received a telegram from Sub-Inspector Ahern of Muttaburra, stating that William Bayles, a stockman employed on the Rosebrook station, was murdered (date unknown) by two blacks at a place about twenty miles from Brighton Downs station. The murder was witnessed by two gins, who stated that after murdering the unfortunate man, the blackfellows burned the body. The skull and teeth of the murdered man were recovered. Both the blackfellows were captured by the police, and were in custody at Winton.<sup>389</sup>

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<sup>382</sup> Brisbane Courier 7 December 1886 p 4. QPG Vol. XXIV] 19 February 1887 [No. 8, p 97.

<sup>383</sup> Queensland Figaro and Punch 17 April 1886 p 6.

<sup>384</sup> Week 23 October 1886 p 28.

<sup>385</sup> Warwick Argus 23 November 1886 p 3.

<sup>386</sup> Brisbane Courier 10 February 1886 p 4 & Queenslander 13 February 1886 p 245.

<sup>387</sup> QSA ITM847185 DR78150, 86/843. Brisbane Courier 4 February 1886 p 5.

<sup>388</sup> Qld PG Vol. XXIII] 13 March 1886 [No. 6 p 92.

<sup>389</sup> Queenslander 19 June 1886 p 965.

The two Aboriginals committed for trial for the murder of William Bayles at Rosebrook, left Winton, together with a couple of gins and piccaninnies, on 27 September, for Rockhampton. The coloured ladies, in shirts and trousers, riding cross-legged, carrying their youngsters, looked quite happy and contented.<sup>390</sup> Jimmy and Billy were tried at Rockhampton on 21 April 1887 for the murder of William Bayles on 20 May 1886. They were found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to two years' hard labour.<sup>391</sup>

## G — GEORGETOWN.

Normanton. A Chinaman came in from Mr Haydon's selection on Walker's Creek with the information that a man well-known about town as McCawley or Magilvery was nearly murdered by the Walker Creek blacks. Mr Haydon, in company with Constable Gallagher and Mr Martin started for the scene of the outrage, and Sub-Inspector Poingdestre was advised. During their absence, McCawley returned to town. He stated that he was at Walker's Creek in a hut with a German census enumerator and a Chinaman, when the blacks stuck up the hut, on a rampage for blood and rations. The census man and the Chinaman went under the bed. McCawley picked up an axe; killed a black and his companion decamped. The Chinaman cleared from the dangerous premises and McCawley followed. Mr Martin and Constable Gallagher returned to town; they followed the blacks a long distance and recovered all the property taken except a rifle. Mr Haydon's black boy was discovered all right, but nothing of the census collector except his papers could be found.<sup>392</sup>

Sub-Inspector John Lamond, of Carl Creek, telegraphed the Commissioner for Police, 16 March, stating that Patrick Horan, a stockman, reported that the Gregory River blacks attempted to murder him 20 miles from Normanton on 5 March; they broke his jaw and took his firearms and cartridges. They killed the boy he had with him, as he heard the boy's screams after making his own escape.<sup>393</sup>

Camooweal, March 14. On 9 March, John Kennedy left Camooweal (late Rocklands) township with a team of horses for a saw pit on the O'Shaughnessy, a distance of about forty miles, making the usual stages. He arrived at his destination on the 11th, loaded his dray and pitched camp for the night. He and his black boy "turned in" after their evening meal, and fell soundly asleep. John Kennedy was sleeping under the dray on the ground, and was without firearms. As the country around was wild, it occurred to him there might be blacks in the vicinity, so he laid by his side a harness for defence if attacked by blacks during the night. Sometime after he fell asleep, he felt himself struck by some heavy weapon, and rising partially stupefied, discovered a huge blackfellow over him. He had received some serious wounds on the head and face. Kennedy grasped the harness, the clinking of its chain caused the blackfellow to clear, and he chased him away from his camp. It appeared the blackfellow attacked Kennedy with a boomerang and threw a tomahawk at him which cut him on the right cheek. Kennedy recovered the tomahawk, tied a towel and other linen around his head to stop the bleeding and started with his boy for my camp, a distance of twenty miles. He reached my camp on the 12th, in a very exhausted state from loss of blood. Dr Blaney was there at the time, and immediately sent forward a black boy to Mr James Kennedy, of Landsborough Hotel, Camooweal, the owner of the team, with a request to send horses to meet the injured man. James Kennedy, with others, arrived at my camp from Camooweal on Friday evening, and Kennedy was sent on to Camooweal that night in charge of Dr Blaney. Mr James

<sup>390</sup> Telegraph 11 October 1886 p 2.

<sup>391</sup> Qld PG Vol. XXIV] 11 May 1887 [No. 20 p 190. Capricornian 23 April 1887 p 17 & Brisbane Courier 2 May 1887 p 5

<sup>392</sup> Capricornian 29 May 1886 p 25

<sup>393</sup> Telegraph 18 March 1886 p 4.

Kennedy, with one white volunteer, F Hunt and two black boys noted for their tracking abilities, went that night and camped near the scene of the attempted murder and watched the camp all night but no blacks turned up. In the early morning, James Kennedy organised a start and when a few miles on the trail Kennedy's boy Spider descried a little smoke ascending about three miles distant, towards which the party made. On reaching the spot, they discovered the bird had flown. Picking up the tracks, the party in about three miles came up to one black boy, who was captured by Mr Kennedy after a short struggle. He was found to be a runaway boy who absconded a few days previously from a Mr Spiggs, travelling with bulls to Rocklands station. On him were discovered Kennedy's knife and rations stolen from the dray, also pipes, matches and tobacco. The party proceeded to the dray and discovered a broken boomerang, on which was hair and blood. The party then proceeded to Camooweal and on arrival, handed the prisoner to Constable Gibson within forty-eight hours of the attempted murder. Dr Blaney, on arrival at Camooweal, examined Kennedy's head and discovered several scalp wounds, one rather serious, but the skull was intact. The patient was progressing favourably, though weak from haemorrhage.<sup>394</sup> Cooktown, May 10, 1887. At the Circuit Court before Judge Cooper, Joe an Aboriginal, convicted of wounding with intent to murder John Kennedy at Balehorpe Creek in March 1886, was sentenced to fifteen years penal servitude.<sup>395</sup>

# 1887

## D DIVISION — COOKTOWN.

A mob of blacks on a marauding expedition gutted several Chinese huts on Sandy Creek and the Lower Palmer. One Chinaman was believed to have been killed and eaten, but no tidings of his fate have reached here yet. Sub-Inspector Stafford and the police were in pursuit of the offenders.<sup>396</sup>

The Commissioner for Police has received the following telegram from Cooktown:

A wire has been received from Musgrave telegraph station, stating that the blacks stuck up Kalkah station on Monday, badly spearing one man. The Coen River police have been despatched to the scene. A later telegram states: The Chinaman who was speared by the blacks at Kalkah station died at Musgrave station on Tuesday. Sub-inspector Marrett will go out as well as the Coen police.<sup>397</sup>

Senior-Constable Whiteford and his trackers were doing good service amongst the dark-skins in the region of the Laura. Although disgracefully horsed, Whiteford and his boys had succeeded in dispersing several hundred blacks and breaking up quite an extensive camp. They discovered the blacks in possession of several horses, two of which they secured, and the remaining five, after the ruin of the camp, found their way back to their various owners. The animals, however, had been well ridden by their sable captors, and all had sore backs. When stolen, several of the horses were unbroken colts, but the darkies had put them through their paces properly, and now they were all thoroughly broken in.<sup>398</sup>

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<sup>394</sup> Brisbane Courier 23 April 1886 p 3.

<sup>395</sup> QPG Vol. XXIV] 4 June 1887 [No. 23, p 209.

<sup>396</sup> Queenslander 15 January 1887 p 87.

<sup>397</sup> Queenslander 7 May 1887 p 725.

<sup>398</sup> Telegraph 27 July 1887 p 3.

Cooktown, August 29. Constable Cowen went down to the blacks' camp and saw a white woman. He asked one of the blacks to bring her back, which he did. Cowen took her, after a lot of palaver, to the police camp, where he fed her and kept her that night. Constable Cowen with Constable Connelly started for Cooktown with the woman on horseback. When about eight miles from the camp, a mob of blacks, who were in war paint, attempted to bar their progress. One spear was thrown which did not hit anyone. The police fired two shots, at which the horse the woman was on bucked several times and she fell off and struck her head and shoulders on the ground. A little while afterwards, the blacks showed again. The police again fired upon them and they dispersed. By permission, Dr Kortüm visited the hospital and found the woman in an exhausted state, dying from the injuries she received in the fall from the horse. Dr Kortüm stated that the captive was an albino. She appeared to be between 50 and 60 years of age. The skin of her face and breasts was shrivelled up and her hair grey. The cartilage of her nose was cut. She was not expected to live. August 30, the woman brought in from a blacks' camp on the Norman River by the police, died in hospital last night.<sup>399</sup>

W Owen, landlord of the Marton Hotel, Cooktown, was out on 27 July, at a selection he held near Carroll's Creek, and had not been seen nor heard of since. The police had gone in search. His family live at Marton township.<sup>400</sup> Scouting troopers found his pipe and hat in his hut. It was feared that he had been killed by the blacks, with whom he had some trouble about six months ago. Owen was about 50 years of age and was a very temperate and respectable man.<sup>401</sup>

Maytown, December 26. A mob of Mosman River blacks attacked a Chinese camp about two miles from Cobb's stables, twelve miles from Maytown. The blacks killed two of them, and the third escaped, and no trace was found of him. Two white police and some volunteers from town went to the scene of the murder, and subsequently Sub-Inspector Stafford and troopers started in pursuit, hoping to track the mob. Heavy showers of rain obliterated the tracks, so it was doubtful that the troopers would find the blacks. This makes the fifth death during the present year caused by the blacks. Robbery and want of food seemed to be the chief motive.<sup>402</sup>

## D — PORT DOUGLAS.

Mr E J Loder stated:

On 1 February 1887, I was attacked by a black near Clarke's Camp, on the Russell River diggings. I and my brother Fred, with the aid of thirty blacks, had fetched a quantity of provisions from Scrubby Creek, and we fed the Aboriginals well the previous evening. Next morning my brother started back with about twenty-five blacks, and in the meantime my brother Oswald, who had been away with McCord to try and get a packer to fetch us in a load of provisions, returned to the camp. There were about a dozen blacks hanging about our camp, doubtless expecting to get another feed. We refused to give them anything at dinnertime, but at tea time we took pity on them and gave them their tea, and then told them they could 'yan' (go off), but they still kept hanging about. After I had finished having my tea, I went to the fire and stooped to pick up a burning stick to light my pipe. I suddenly felt a severe blow on my right elbow, and my first thought was that a falling limb from a tree had struck me, but on looking up I saw the 'black devil' whirling a scrub knife over my head. I immediately sprang at him and canted him clean over. I then called to my brother to fetch the revolver, and, strange to say, though he had to run through them to get to the tent, not one of them attempted to stop him. I believe the others had been urging this particular black to attack me, but

<sup>399</sup> Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 3 September 1887 p 3. Telegraph 27 September 1887 p 3. QSA ITM847244 DR78303, 87/6739.

<sup>400</sup> Brisbane Courier 9 August 1887 p 5.

<sup>401</sup> Queensland Figaro and Punch 10 September 1887 p 11. QSA ITM38753 DR86580.

<sup>402</sup> Queenslander 7 January 1888 p 8.

not one of them attempted to help him, and as soon as my brother got the revolver and quietened the fellow that I was struggling with, they let out a yell and cleared off as fast as their legs would carry them. We then fired off half-a-dozen shots to attract the attention of Clarke's party. They afterwards told us they heard them but they took no notice of them, thinking they were fired by somebody in the bush. I subsequently went to Clarke's Camp that night and got my arm dressed, and walked into Scrubby Creek the next morning, and thence rode into the hospital.<sup>403</sup>

Within the last two months they have robbed four camps. They commenced about seven weeks ago by robbing a selector named Ebner, and during his absence, cleared his camp of everything but his wedges. About three weeks or a month ago, the blacks cleared out a selector named Robb and two sawyers, who were all living just above the Barron Falls and also robbed Mr Hannam's bailiff. Formartine, April 23, 1887.<sup>404</sup>

May 14. On the Herberton Road, about Grove's way, on 12 May a traveller met a cow with several spears in its body.<sup>405</sup> Herberton, July 11. Sub-Inspector Garraway and three native troopers arrived at Carrington (near Atherton), to repress outrages committed by the blacks. The party was too small, and not likely to do any good.<sup>406</sup>

Sergeant Whelan, of Herberton, who was camped near Atherton with black troopers, made several trips into the scrub and located a number of Aboriginal camps. In one camp, two rifles, three tomahawks, and a number of billies were found, and in others blankets, clothing, &c.<sup>407</sup>

A working bullock, the property of Mr Andrew Banning of Freshwater Creek, was found with a spear sticking into his flesh. The extreme boldness of the Aboriginals was shown because even in the daytime they rob the Chinamen's gardens of half the produce with perfect impunity. Sergeant Whelan was directed to disperse these troublesome customers.<sup>408</sup>

Mr M J McCarthy left his selection, situated on the Upper Barron, at the crossing of the Cairns-Herberton Road, 27 miles from Cairns, and returned to town. He left two men on the homestead, one named John Johnson, who had fever, and the other a Brazilian native known as George. Johnson asleep in his bunk, woke in time to see a blackfellow in the act of grasping a double-barrelled breech-loader which lay alongside the bunk. Johnson yelled out, and the black ran off; Johnson took a snap shot at him, which was said to have taken effect, though not fatally. It was afterwards found that an axe had also been stolen. A fortnight previously whilst Mr Colley and Mr Jackson, selectors in the neighbourhood, were engaged in constructing a fence some 50 yards distant a blackfellow surreptitiously entered a small humpy kept for storing corn. A dog gave the alarm, and a blackfellow was seen to disappear in the bed of the river with an axe he had stolen. This happened at a short distance from Mr McCarthy's.<sup>409</sup>

## G — GEORGETOWN.

Mr Henry Williams of Springfield station, near Junction Creek Telegraph Station, was attacked by blacks. The following additional particulars were furnished:

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<sup>403</sup> Brisbane Courier 28 February 1887 p 2.

<sup>404</sup> Cairns Post 28 April 1887 p 3.

<sup>405</sup> Telegraph 21 May 1887 p 9.

<sup>406</sup> Cairns Post 13 July 1887 p 2.

<sup>407</sup> Telegraph 10 September 1887 p 3.

<sup>408</sup> Cairns Post 19 November 1887 p 2.

<sup>409</sup> Cairns Post 26 October 1887 p 3.

On 8 August 1887, Mr Williams and one of his stockmen named C Boague went to an outlying camp near the Lynd River, almost nine miles from Springfield, to burn the grass around a yard there. He took with him six blackfellows, which Mr Williams had allowed to come into the station about 8 or 10 months previously, and who had been employed about the station clearing scrub, &c., for which they had been supplied with rations. After burning the grass, Mr Williams was filling his pipe when a blackfellow suddenly jumped at his master and struck him on the head with the tomahawk. Mr Williams was half stunned with the blow, but instinctively drew his revolver, and fired a shot, which caused the blacks to decamp on the instant, but not before the blackfellow made another blow at Williams, which inflicted an ugly wound on the side of his neck. At the moment the blackfellow attacked Williams, two others rushed at the stockman, one of them clasping him around the arms and body from behind and the other seized him by the throat, and was on the point of choking him when the lucky shot was fired from Mr Williams's revolver. The other two myalls attacked a domesticated black boy who was also with Mr Williams, but he having a stick of some kind in his hand, fought them bravely, and got off with a few severe blows and bruises. The whole thing was evidently planned by the myalls, and had it not been for Mr Williams's presence of mind—although in a half-conscious state—in drawing and firing the revolver, he, the stockman, and the black boy must have been foully murdered. Dr Routhe, of Georgetown was sent for, and on arrival at Springfield, a week later, he extracted several splinters of bone that were resting on the membrane that encloses the brain, as the blow from the tomahawk had splintered the skull and laid the membrane bare. Williams rode back the 9 miles to the station the same day after the attack and was there over a week without surgical aid. The day after Dr Routhe extracted the splinters of bone, Williams started for Georgetown with the doctor on horseback. Mr Williams was recovering fast.<sup>410</sup>

Normanton, July 8. The remains of James Ferguson, a publican at the Twelve-mile, were found by Inspector Poingdestre. Ferguson was killed by two blackboys who went with him to open a new track to Croydon. The body, partly burned, was found about forty miles from where Ferguson started. The blackboys escaped to the bush. Ferguson was well known and esteemed here.<sup>411</sup> Jimmy, an Aboriginal, was charged, on warrant issued by the Normanton Bench, with the wilful murder of James Ferguson, about 22 June last. Description: About 40 years of age, 5 feet 4 inches high, medium build, hair, whiskers and moustache turning grey. Supposed to be in the bush, about twelve miles from Cloncurry.<sup>412</sup> Jimmy (Aboriginal), charged with murder, was arrested by the Normanton police. He was committed for trial.<sup>413</sup> Jimmy was tried by the Normanton Circuit Court on 7 April 1890 for the murder of James Ferguson, but was discharged by the court and released.<sup>414</sup>

### **Kimberley Murders**

Telegraph to Commissioner of Police from Inspector A Douglas, Georgetown, 24 November 1887:

October 28, J W Jones pilot wired from Kimberley eighty blacks here, great trouble.<sup>415</sup> Have tried to disperse them to be removed. Fitzgerald wired Poingdestre 31<sup>st</sup> to patrol and see Jones. Poingdestre started November 2, but was unable to proceed more than a mile as he was suffering from a severe attack of haemorrhoids so he despatched his campkeeper, Constable Lonigan who he says returned on the 6<sup>th</sup>. Everything having been done in a satisfactory manner, the above he reports by letter dated 7<sup>th</sup>. On the 21<sup>st</sup> Brannell wires, man named Bray states six Aboriginals shot lately Kimberley by native troopers, three dead bodies now lying there. I instructed him to inform

<sup>410</sup> Telegraph 13 September 1887 p 2.

<sup>411</sup> Brisbane Courier 9 July 1887 p 5.

<sup>412</sup> QPG Vol. XXIV] 24 September 1887 [No. 39, p 319.

<sup>413</sup> QPG Vol. XXVI] 22 June 1889 [No. 25, p 262.

<sup>414</sup> QPG Vol. XXVII] 31 May 1890 [No. 22, p 200.

<sup>415</sup> The Telegraph Station at Kimberley (Karumba), was at the mouth of the Norman River. The river extends south-easterly 50 miles in a tortuous course to the township of Normanton, where the navigation ceases.

Poingdestre and to wire further particulars at once. He wires PM and Dr visit Kimberley today and hold enquiry. Have directed Brannelly and Poingdestre to attend and wire results from Kimberley.<sup>416</sup>

At about 10 o'clock at night on 26 May 1887, Inspector Ahern heard some black gins making a great noise at the back of his private residence. He went down to the camp, where two black trackers, named Toby and Pilot, slept. Here he saw Toby in Pilot's camp: the former was calling out "Marmie, marmie: Pilot been fight me." In the meantime, Constable Griffin arrived, and was ordered to put Toby in the lockup, while Pilot was ordered to keep to his camp. As he was removing Toby, Griffin noticed blood upon him. When Dr Kirkaldy made an examination, he said he did not think Toby could live. Steps were then taken to arrest Pilot, but he had cleared out. Toby was an Adavale black, and had not been long in Charleville. He bore a very bad reputation and was also addicted to drink. There were numerous wounds, which appeared to have been inflicted with a shear blade, and one abdominal cut was fatally deep. Pilot had been with Inspector Ahern for ten years. He bore a good character, and was trusted implicitly.<sup>417</sup>

Pilot, an Aboriginal, was charged, on warrant issued by the Charleville Bench, with the wilful murder of Toby, another Aboriginal, on 26 May. Offender was a native of Burdekin, about 28 years of age, 5 feet 8 inches high, slender build, pock-pitted face, smart appearance, small moustache, speaks English well; wore Bedford cord riding breeches, leggings and boots; has been a tracker.<sup>418</sup> Pilot, the black trooper, charged with the manslaughter of Toby, another trooper, on 26 May 1887, was tried at Roma on 9 August, and acquitted, the jury having found Pilot not guilty, on the ground of self-defence.<sup>419</sup>

Inspector Stuart, at Rockhampton, reported to the Commissioner of Police that the police at Clermont, dated 11 November, had been informed by letter that on the 2nd instant a blackboy, in the employ of Mr William Emerson, of Avon Downs, was murdered by blacks near Mount Douglas while carrying the mail. The Mount Douglas blacks admitted committing the murder. Neither the body of deceased nor the horse had been discovered, but some letters he was carrying were found in the scrub near the road. Constable Kelly and a black tracker were despatched to Mount Douglas to investigate the matter.<sup>420</sup>

# 1888

D DIVISION — COOKTOWN.

At the Court House, Maytown on 23 January 1888, T C Davies JP held an inquest into the cause of death of Alfred Wright who was found to have been speared by the blacks on Strathleven station on 9 January 1888.<sup>421</sup> Sub-Inspector Brab R Stafford of the N. M. Police Barracks, Palmerville on 28 January 1888 reported to Inspector Murray, Cooktown as follows:

In reference to the murder on the 9th inst. by blacks of Walter (sic, Alfred) Wright at Strathleven, I have the honour to report that, accompanied by Mr J McMaugh, the manager of Strathleven Station, I arrived there on the 15th inst. and was shewn the place where the murder had been

<sup>416</sup> See p 188 below.

<sup>417</sup> Brisbane Courier 2 June 1887 p 6.

<sup>418</sup> QPG Vol. XXIV] 11 June 1887 [No. 24, p 214.

<sup>419</sup> QPG Vol. XXIV] 17 September 1887 [No. 38, p 318. Telegraph 13 August 1887 p 2.

<sup>420</sup> Brisbane Courier 18 November 1887 p 5.

<sup>421</sup> QSA ITM2729086 DR102738.

committed, about one mile from the station on the opposite side of the Palmer River. I found two tents still standing there and the commencement of a sapling yard. There were no footprints of blacks visible in the immediate vicinity of the tents, the heavy rain that had fallen having obliterated them, but on searching round I found broken portions of two spears and a hat identified by Mr McMaugh as belonging to John Carrigan; and at a distance of about a mile from the tents, where the ground was soft, we found the tracks of five blacks which led us to where the tribe had camped on Fish Creek about 15 miles southeast of the station. The body of Walter Wright was found by Mr McMaugh on the 10th inst. caught in a Ti tree in the bed of the Palmer, where it had apparently caught after being thrown in by his murderers, about 400 yards from the tents, with 8 spear wounds in it and the head nearly severed from the trunk by some sharp instrument. As decomposition was rapidly setting in Mr McMaugh thought it best to bury it at once before reporting the matter to the police.

From the statements of Mr McMaugh and Carrigan, I gather that the deceased and Carrigan together with a small black boy belonging to the Palmer tribe of blacks had been left on the south side of the Palmer to look after some cattle that had been mustered until the river was low enough to allow them to be crossed and yarded at the station and that on the day of the murder Carrigan and Wright had started to erect a yard for catching their horses about 50 yards from the tents and nearer the Palmer River; about three o'clock the two white men and the blackboy were all lying down in the shade of a tree close to where they were erecting the yard and hearing a noise looked up and found five blacks between them and the tents where a Snider carbine and revolver, with ammunition for both, were hanging. All hands then started to run away, Wright and the black boy down the river and Carrigan up the river towards the station and being an excellent runner escaped with a spear wound in each arm (apparently caused by the same spear) and one in the back, which did not penetrate. He caught a horse and rode about 10 or 15 miles into the bush, where he must have passed the night, as he did not turn up at the station till about eight o'clock next morning, 10th inst. Afraid to call for the boat which was moored on the opposite side of the river, rode his horse into the Palmer and swam him halfway across before he cooed, and was met by the boat.

There were only five blacks concerned in this murder, which I should say was not premeditated, as they, trusting the Palmer being up to prevent them from coming across any of the station people, were hunting near where the men were camped and seeing the tents from a distance came nearer and finding the men apparently asleep and unarmed, made the attack. There is no doubt, in my mind, that had Carrigan stood himself and faced the blacks and called on Wright who was quite new to the bush to do the same, they could easily have fought their way to the tent where their revolvers were and so saved both their lives. This murder was in my opinion the result of accident and opportunity. I patrolled the river in the early part of December last and found no tracks of blacks except old ones. The stations on the Palmer are notoriously under manned, which no doubt gives the blacks courage to commit outrages in the wet season when I cannot go for bogs. As I reported in my wire of 27th inst., I followed the tracks of the murderers of Wright to within 10 miles of Gamboola on the Mitchell, where Sub-Inspector White had found their camp and recovered many articles belonging to the murdered man. I will forward a copy of the depositions in the magisterial inquiry held in Maytown on the death of Walter Wright.<sup>422</sup>

Attack on Strathleven. The supposed dressing received by the blacks, after the murder of poor Wright and the spearing of Carrigan, had not taught these black demons a very salutary lesson. On March 1st, during the absence from the station of Mr McMaugh, the manager, and Mr Nicolson, who were out on the run, the stockman Mead and Chinese cook, Ah Min were in camp. It was raining heavily and both were inside the house. Mead was lying down, and saw six blacks creeping into the banana clump. Ah Min fired a shot, while Mead got the firearms ready. No sooner had the shot been fired when a large party, about 40 in number, bearing blazing torches, appeared at the back of the house. They rushed towards the house and attempted to set the thatched roof on fire. Some well-directed shots beat them off. The big mob ran along the river on the same side as the station, while the six who were pursued by Mead and Ah Min to the bank of the river, into which they plunged and crossed to the other side. Three hours after the attack, Messrs Nicolson

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<sup>422</sup> QSA ITM2729086 DR102738. Brisbane Courier 31 January 1888 p 7. Telegraph 6 February 1888 p 2.

and McMaugh returned. On March 6, in bright moonlight, the blacks pulled down the fence in four places, with the intention of removing the horses. They speared a chestnut horse through the wither and rendered him useless. It was valued at £30. The torches were made of messmate bark which they stripped from trees in the paddock. They stole all the branding irons, some of which were found near Highbury, 35 miles away, the nearest station to Strathleven. Sub-Inspector Stafford went in pursuit, and was determined to follow them on foot, as the country was so boggy and impossible to utilise horses. Strathleven seemed marked out by these desperadoes for particular attention, being emboldened by the small staff, which only consisted of the manager, two Europeans and a Chinese cook, who was leaving on the return of the manager to the station.<sup>423</sup>

Cooktown. Reports come from Cooktown of various depredations by the blacks about Sandown. Messrs Clausen and McGrath, teamsters, have had 106 bullocks speared out of a total of 120.<sup>424</sup>

Thursday island, June 27. Police intelligence received from Cape York Peninsula stated that Mr Schramm, the manager of Bertiehaugh Station, was not murdered, though the station was attacked by blacks.<sup>425</sup>

Cooktown, August 15, 1888. Information reached town that Mr C B Sweetland, manager of Kalkah station, and a man named Blake were speared by blacks. Blake's injuries were serious, but Mr Sweetland was only slightly injured.<sup>426</sup> Mr Sweetland stated:

About ten days ago, myself and a man named Blake, with a blackboy left Kalkah station on a prospecting tour. We reached a spot between the King and Lukin Rivers, about 50 miles N. W. of Kalkah where we camped. The blacks were very plentiful, and we sighted three different mobs the first two days out, and had every reason to believe they were dogging our tracks. However, one morning as Blake and I were working in a gully, we were saluted by a shower of spears. Blake got one through the joint of his left knee and I got one through my left arm. We had our rifles handy, and immediately opened fire when the miscreants took to the hills. They were led by a blackfellow in moleskins, shirt, and felt hat, though where he obtained these articles, I cannot make out. The blackboy was about half a mile away, watching the horses when they came on us. It was very hilly country where we were camped, and the blacks must have been watching our movements from the hills. Blake was completely disabled, but we made the Musgrave telegraph station.<sup>427</sup>

Inspector Murray telegraphed the Commissioner of Police from Cooktown that the blacks had, on 26 June 1888, robbed Sheridan's Mount Ruby station, on the Normanby, of firearms, cartridges, and stores. Sub-inspector Urquhart and Senior-Constable Whiteford proceeded to the scene of the robbery.<sup>428</sup>

On 19 October 1888, Mr Mowbray PM at Cooktown forwarded to the Secretary, Crown Law Offices, Brisbane a certificate of particulars of the inquest held on the death of Tow Young, who was killed by the Aboriginals at Normanby on 8 September 1888.<sup>429</sup>

Cooktown. Two native troopers, who deserted the McIvor police station, were brought into Cooktown, said a telegram of 24 September, from Granite police camp, both suffering from spear

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<sup>423</sup> Morning Bulletin 15 March 1888 p 5. Telegraph 4 April 1888 p 2.

<sup>424</sup> Morning Bulletin 20 January 1888 p 5.

<sup>425</sup> Morning Bulletin 28 June 1888 p 5.

<sup>426</sup> Brisbane Courier 16 August 1888 p 5.

<sup>427</sup> Morning Bulletin 2 October 1888 p 6.

<sup>428</sup> Brisbane Courier 9 August 1888 p 3. QPG 1888 p 263

<sup>429</sup> QSA ITM2729428 DR102774. QPG 1888 p 376.

wounds in several places. They state that while travelling through the bush with their gins, they came across a mob of blacks who invited them to camp to which they consented. At night time the tribe turned on the deserters, took the gins away, and speared them. The deserters fled to Granite Camp, where they took refuge in a Chinaman's hut till discovered by the police, and brought to town. The spear wounds were severe and painful.<sup>430</sup>

## D — PORT DOUGLAS.

Early January, the Daintree blacks made a raid on the cows hamstringing some, killing others, and frightening the rest into the scrub. Daintree residents were getting so much of this that they wanted to know what was the use of Sub-Inspector Garraway's camp near the Barron? A police camp was most wanted between Port Douglas and the Mitchell, in which case Portley's camp should be removed to the Daintree.<sup>431</sup>

James Coombes, a carter, about sixty-nine years of age, said the *Wild River Times*, caused some excitement at the Union Camp. He lost three fine draught horses at the hands of the Mount Mulligan blacks, and while hunting for them for the last few weeks, the worry played upon his mind and drove him insane. He rode into their camp and shot a gin who was carrying a piccaninny on her shoulders; the bullet penetrated the fleshy part of her neck, and then the thigh of the piccaninny, but only through the flesh. The wounds were not dangerous. Immediately after the report of the shot, he was seen making the blacks surrender their spears and afterwards rode into the Union Camp with a large bundle of spears. When he reached the camp, he was seized by half-a-dozen hands and his horse and revolver taken from him. In the meantime, while the excitement was at its highest, a man started for Thornborough to inform the police; Coombes was detained at the Union Camp till their arrival. He was taken to Thornborough. It was believed he rode into the blacks' camp to chastise two blacks who were well known, notorious characters, who were dreaded by all owners of cattle and horses about Mount Mulligan.<sup>432</sup>

Intelligence reached Herberton on 3 May instant that the Chinese leper, while on the way from Georgetown to Herberton, had been killed by Aboriginals between Woodville and the Union Camp on the Hodgkinson.<sup>433</sup>

On 27 May 1888, Mr Jas. Anderson, of Messrs Anderson and Reid, Russell River, proceeded from his upper store to Harvey's Creek, and then to Cairns to report to the police that the blacks had broken into the store and taken everything they could lay hands on, including three revolvers and a rifle, with a quantity of ammunition. The blacks had stolen firearms from the place before, but had not succeeded in getting ammunition. The depredators were now camped on Mr J A Metcalfe's selection, about three miles from the upper camp. They had destroyed Mr McNaughton's humpy situated on the selection and taken away every scrap of iron. There were probably a hundred collected in the vicinity, on both sides of the river. This was the second time they had broken into and rifled Messrs Anderson and Reid's upper store, and looted the premises during the absence of Mr Anderson and his man. Mr Anderson reached Cairns on 28 May, leaving at 11 o'clock the same night; and when he met Mr Metcalfe at the Mulgrave Hotel at 1 o'clock on 29 May, Mr Anderson was accompanied by Sergeant Whelan and his troopers. Many selectors question if these visits by the sergeant do very much more than scare the blacks for a day or two by the occasional discharge of firearms.<sup>434</sup>

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<sup>430</sup> Morning Bulletin 2 October 1888 p 6.

<sup>431</sup> Queensland Figaro and Punch 28 January 1888 p 6.

<sup>432</sup> Capricornian 21 January 1888 p 27.

<sup>433</sup> Telegraph 21 May 1888 p 2. QSA ITM847276 DR78396, 88/4208

<sup>434</sup> Cairns Post 30 May 1888 p 2.

Geraldton, August 23. Edward Maher (aka Edmund Meagher), a contractor for left home at noon with two Aboriginals, and an hour afterwards his dead body was found with the head nearly severed from the trunk.<sup>435</sup> Townsville, May 3, 1889. At the Circuit Court, Paddy and Tommy, Aboriginals, were tried for the murder of Edmund Meagher, near Goondi Plantation, Geraldton, in August last, and were acquitted. In this case the prisoners were acquitted because the statements made by the prisoners at the Police Court, Geraldton, in which they admitted the commission of the crime, and described all circumstances connected therewith, could not be received in evidence, as they had been improperly taken by the Police Magistrate.<sup>436</sup>

Mr Fullerton, Mitchell Vale Station, 16 October 1888 to the Inspector of Police, Port Douglas:

The Blacks have been spearing cattle on Bushy Creek about three miles from here during the last few moonlight nights. Can you send a detachment of the boys to patrol this part?<sup>437</sup>

On 26 October 1888, Thomas Stewart, Barron River wrote, "Mr Affleck, Sir, Black sperin cattle down the river, saw three just dead, 5 spered. One month, since the (sic) started sperin down the river."<sup>438</sup>

On 6 December 1888, Fred Robinson of Wooroora, Herberton complained to the Commissioner that the Aborigines were spearing his cattle and asked for Native Police protection. He advised that he had wired the Sub-Inspector, Native Police camp at Barron Waters but he had not yet arrived.<sup>439</sup>

# 1889

## D DIVISION — COOKTOWN.

Sunday, February 17. George Tarrant and a blackboy, who were occupying F O'Beirne's twelve-mile out-station, near the Laura, were attacked by blacks, and Tarrant was killed. The blackboy, who was wounded in the arm, brought in the news, and the troopers left for the Laura. The country was flooded.<sup>440</sup> In the course of the attack on Tarrant, the blacks cut his body in half below the ribs, cut off his legs above the knees, and chopped the thumb off his right hand. His head and face were hacked about with an axe; and he received no less than twelve spear wounds, one in the right hand, three in the right arm, one in the left breast, one on the left shoulder blade, two in the ribs, two in the legs, and one in the left arm. Deceased had relations in Rockhampton, a sister and a brother-in-law named Olive. The blacks stole from the hut one double-barrel b.l. gun, one Colt's revolver, 1½ lb. shot, and axes, rations, and blankets. On the 19th, Senior-Constable Whiteford made another start in pursuit of the murderers, but, owing to the state of the country, it will be some days before he returns.<sup>441</sup> Inspector F. J. Murray wired the Commissioner of Police that Senior-Constable Whiteford reported he has found the blacks who murdered George Tarrant, and

<sup>435</sup> Brisbane Courier 24 August 1888 p 5. QPG Vol. XXV] 29 September 1888 [No. 39, p 334. QSA ITM2729409 DR102755.

<sup>436</sup> Brisbane Courier 4 May 1889 p 6.

<sup>437</sup> QSA Item ID 6820, 89/268, frame number 31.

<sup>438</sup> QSA Item ID 6820, 89/268, frame number 30.

<sup>439</sup> QSA Item ID 6820, 88/9359, frame numbers 24-25.

<sup>440</sup> Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 19 February 1889 p 4.

<sup>441</sup> Morning Bulletin 1 March 1889 p 6. Daily Northern Argus 2 March 1889 p 4. Telegraph 13 March 1889 p 2.

had recovered all the property stolen besides administering salutary punishment to the treacherous murderers.<sup>442</sup>

On 15 May, Inspector Murray of Cooktown, sent a report to the Commissioner of Police on the murder of Edmund Watson by blacks at Fox's station, near Mein telegraph station, Cape York, on the night of 11 May. At the time of the murder, Watson was sleeping in a hammock under the veranda of the hut when he was stabbed in the throat with a knife, and bled to death in about two hours. At the same time, a young man named James Evans, who was sleeping at the back of the hut, was cut on the jaw with an axe which broke the jaw and left a cut 4in. long. There were two men sleeping in the hut who were not injured, and the blacks cleared out as soon as the two blows were struck. The man Evans is now in a bad state, and every effort was made to get him to Cooktown, but it was feared he will not live to reach that place. The blacks had only just been let in at Watson's and other stations on the peninsula, and were being fed by the squatters. Sub-Inspector Urquhart left Paterson with troopers for the Mein Telegraph Station to disperse the blacks who murdered Edmund Watson on Pine Tree Station. The deceased's brother, Grandison Watson, accompanied the police.<sup>443</sup>

From information given by Mr Grandison Watson, the brother of Edmund Watson, who accompanied Sub-Inspector Urquhart, they both had a remarkably narrow escape. They were walking along when Urquhart noticed a spear was sticking in his leg. It had passed through the band of his trousers, grazing his stomach, and lodged in his leg a little above the knee. The spear only just entered Urquhart's leg, and he pulled it out and felt no ill effects from it.<sup>444</sup>

A valuable stallion belonging to Gamboola was killed, and four mares missing. Mr John McLean reported several head of cattle speared on his Lynd run close to the homestead. Strathleven, Lakefield, and other stations were also losers, and Chinese gardeners complained bitterly of the insecurity of life and property.<sup>445</sup>

## D — PORT DOUGLAS.

Herberton, January 14. Startling depredations were committed by the blacks whilst the native police were patrolling Waroona and Cashmere stations on Sunday Creek, which is between the two stations, the blacks killed a valuable mule and also speared a horse belonging to the police under Mr Cadet Affleck. The blacks were killing cattle wholesale on the stations near the Main Range and a native police camp was urgently required at Nigger Creek, Herberton.<sup>446</sup>

On 20 January, the blacks mustered with a strong force at Mr Putts' selection, on the Barron River, with the intention of doing something desperate, as they fired a revolver at Mr Putt, but without injuring him. Mr Putt and his sons afterwards secured the revolver, a box of cartridges, some clothes and a quantity of flour, tea and sugar, which no doubt they had stolen from selectors in the vicinity.<sup>447</sup>

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<sup>442</sup> Queenslander 2 March 1889 p 389.

<sup>443</sup> QSA ITM665852. Queenslander 1 June 1889 p 1013. Capricornian 18 May 1889 p 7. Morning Bulletin 20 May 1889 p 6. Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia 1788-1930 Newcastle: University of Newcastle, 2017-2022, <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.13/1340762> (accessed 27/06/2024). See page 190 below.

<sup>444</sup> QSA ITM665852. Morning Bulletin 19 July 1889 p 6.

<sup>445</sup> Queenslander 21 December 1889 p 1159.

<sup>446</sup> Brisbane Courier 15 January 1889 p 5.

<sup>447</sup> Cairns Post 30 January 1889 p 2.

By wire of 5 February 1889, John Gillespie selector Cardwell complained to the Colonial Secretary that the blacks were troublesome on the Murray River stealing and killing cattle and would he arrange a native police patrol from Geraldton. The Commissioner directed Inspector Isley to arrange the patrol. Senior Constable D Keane from Stewart's Creek with two trackers conducted a patrol of the Murray and Tully Rivers from 6-18 March 1889, which involved searching the blacks' camps and interviewing other selectors. Keane reported that he found no stolen goods nor was there evidence of cattle killing.<sup>448</sup>

Cairns, 13 March. A Chinaman was admitted into the Cairns Hospital suffering from the effects of a bad wound on the forehead he had received from the blacks at the Russell River. It was a deep gash from the frontal bone, missing the eye and extending into the nose. Dr Koch believed he will recover.<sup>449</sup>

Report from the police station at Thornborough by Constable T Deverell, 18 March 1889 advised that an Aborigine named Tommy had speared Garbie, an Aborigine, who came running into town with the spear sticking out of him. He was treated by Dr Blanchard and lived. Tommy was charged with assault and sentenced to seven days in the Thornborough lockup.<sup>450</sup>

Constable Hansen brought in sixteen of the blacks who were a source of annoyance and loss to the settlers about Evelyn. They belonged to the Karamai and lower Johnstone River tribes, and were described as powerful and well-conditioned people, beside whom the Aboriginals of the scrubs about Atherton look miserable beings. Constable Hansen came across the carcasses of two bullocks recently killed by the blacks he brought in.<sup>451</sup> He brought in 40 Aboriginals and applied for a supply of food.<sup>452</sup>

Herberton May 11. The Commissioner of Police wired by Inspector J Stuart, Port Douglas, from a report by Sergeant Kindregan, that the blacks had nearly killed a selector named Thomas, residing at the Evelyn Scrub, eight miles from Herberton. A constable and a black tracker were immediately despatched to the scene of the outrage, and Sub-Inspector Brooke inquired into the matter. The injured man was Mr A Thomas, manager of a cheese factory, a new arrival from New South Wales, and while lying in his bunk, shortly before dinner, he was attacked with an axe, which inflicted fearful injuries. He succeeded, after a terrible struggle, in getting the axe from the blackfellow; Thomas took refuge with the nearest settler in a fainting condition.<sup>453</sup>

Warden Zillman, of Herberton, wired to the acting Under Secretary for Mines, 25 July, to the effect that a Mr McCrohan of Boar's Pocket, had reported that the body of a man had been found near the Russell River diggings. Examination proved that the man had been murdered. Two other diggers were also missing, and they were supposed to have been killed too by the blacks. The police were investigating the affair.<sup>454</sup> Mr J Grimes brought news that the bodies of three Europeans were found, murdered by the blacks, at the Top Camp of the Russell River diggings. The three bodies found were in different localities, covered up by tailings, every vestige of tents and swags had been removed. The body of one man, Frank Paaske, was first observed by his feet protruding from the

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<sup>448</sup> QSA ITM847306 DR69661, 89/3135.

<sup>449</sup> Cairns Post 13 March 1889 p 2.

<sup>450</sup> QSA Item ID 6820, 89/3544, frame number 43.

<sup>451</sup> Brisbane Courier 1 Jul 1889 p 6.

<sup>452</sup> Cairns Post 6 March 1889 p 3.

<sup>453</sup> Brisbane Courier 13 May 1889 p 5 & Telegraph 13 May 1889 p 4.

<sup>454</sup> Telegraph 26 July 1889 p 4.

dirt. A big wave of indignation rolled throughout the district, and the process known as 'dispersing' was very properly rigorously applied.<sup>455</sup>

A digger working by himself some distance from the main camp, disappeared. Upon his absence being noticed, inquiries were made; the blacks mentioned he had gone to Herberton. A blackfellow from the lower Russell, lately in Mr J Reid's employ, stated that his myall acquaintances informed him that they had killed the missing digger by dropping stones on him down the shaft, and that afterwards they had stolen his tent, rations, &c. Senior-Constable Whelan made inquiries.<sup>456</sup> An inquest held at Boar's Pocket before Mr Langdon JP on 9 September 1889 found that John Clifford was murdered by the blacks at Coopooroo Creek, Russell Diggings, sometime in April 1889.<sup>457</sup>

Cairns, August 31. It was reported to the police that two more white men were murdered by the blacks on the Russell River. Black trackers under Senior-Constable Whelan were investigating the matter.<sup>458</sup>

## G — GEORGETOWN.

Wednesday, October 30. A telegram was received by the Commissioner of Police from Inspector Douglas, of Normanton, conveying the intelligence that Joe Flick, who recently escaped from the lockup there, had shot Senior-Constable A Wavell and a black-boy dead, and wounded Mr Hann, of Lawn Hill Station. The Commissioner for Police received the following telegram from Inspector Douglas, of Normanton: Hann reports Flick shot dead, 29 October. Am proceeding there, hold inquiry, hence to Turn-Off Lagoon.<sup>459</sup>



Tribal people living north of Cairns, Qld. Call Numbers PXA 773/Box 6 State Library of NSW.

<sup>455</sup> Capricornian 17 August 1889 p 30. Townsville Daily Bulletin 2 February 1933 p 10. QSA ITM2730007 DR102830. Note only Paaske & Clifford were identified. Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia 1788-1930 Newcastle: University of Newcastle, 2017-2022, <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.13/1340762> (accessed 27/06/2024).

<sup>456</sup> Telegraph 30 July 1889 p 2.

<sup>457</sup> QSA ITM2730006 DR102829.

<sup>458</sup> Darling Downs Gazette 2 September 1889 p 3. Morning Bulletin 2 September 1889 p 5.

<sup>459</sup> Telegraph 2 November 1889 p 4. See p 191 below.

## Chapter 3 — The Nineties

# 1890

### D DIVISION — COOK.<sup>460</sup>

The following telegram of 8 January, received from Inspector F J Murray by the Commissioner for Police: "Blacks have speared a Chinaman in the hand, seven miles below Palmerville, and are reach there for the flood."<sup>461</sup>

Cooktown, January 13. The blacks on the Laura were very troublesome. They stuck up Fergus O'Beirne's station killing horses and cattle, on which they feasted close to the house. It was supposed that the McIntyre blacks made similar depredations on McKenzie's and other stations. Inspector Lamond, with his troopers, was scouring the country.<sup>462</sup>

Maytown, March 24. A mob of Normanby darkies appeared, and one of them commenced throwing spears at an Aboriginal employed by Mr Clifford. Finally, a spear went clean through his body. The police came on the scene soon after and captured Jimmy the blackfellow who threw the spear. Dr Fitzgerald did all he could to relieve the sufferings of the boy speared, but it was all to no avail; he died the next day. Jimmy appeared before the police magistrate charged with murder and was remanded. As there was, however, no white evidence to sustain the charge and probably no competent aboriginal interpreter, Jimmy will very likely escape punishment. The victim some time ago, when attached to the native police, shot Jimmy's brother and this was the cause of the murder. If Jimmy was released and not sent to some other district, he will certainly fall victim to the vengeance of the Palmer tribe. Jimmy was committed for trial to the Cooktown Circuit Court on a charge of murder.<sup>463</sup> Harry was convicted of the manslaughter of Tummie at Maytown in the Cooktown Circuit Court on 14 April 1890 and sentenced to 9 months' hard labour.<sup>464</sup>

The Commissioner of Police received the following telegram from Inspector A J Murray, Cooktown, April 5:

The Maytown police report that a Chinaman named Sun Kwong Chang, of Right-Hand Branch, Palmer River, reports that another Chinaman named Chong Cum Hin, was speared by the blacks on the 26th ultimo, and died from the effects of the wounds. He was buried by Sun Kang Chong on Saturday. I am instructing the Normanby police to make inquiries into the matter."<sup>465</sup>

Myalls, led by some civilised deserters from the Native Police, raided Kalkah station and carried off cattle, arms, and ammunition.<sup>466</sup>

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<sup>460</sup> Division D renamed Cook and included the old Port Douglas Division.

<sup>461</sup> Telegraph 9 January 1890 p 5.

<sup>462</sup> Queenslander 18 January 1890 p 144.

<sup>463</sup> Brisbane Courier 5 April 1890 p 7.

<sup>464</sup> QPG 1890 p 185. There is a strong possibility that Jimmy and Harry are the same person.

<sup>465</sup> Telegraph 8 April 1890 p 4.

<sup>466</sup> Morning Bulletin 13 March 1890 p 5.

Cooktown, August 25. The police arrested a blackboy in Chinatown, who stated that he was with the late H R Jones when the latter was shot. His mother brought him down from Laura and told the police that another boy named Harry, who was implicated in the murder had gone to Bloomfield. He was to be brought up at the Police Court for identification.<sup>467</sup>

Cooktown. September 4. Constables Smith and Murphy arrived here yesterday morning by train, bringing with them the black boy who shot Mr H R Jones at Koolburra, on 3 August. The black boy, who was arrested and confessed to shooting Jones, stated that his reasons for doing the deed were because Jones worked him too hard, and had threatened to shoot him. The boy further said, "Me been shoot him that pfeller first time. Suppose Harry, the other boy, come round hut to look out me, me shoot him that pfeller too."<sup>468</sup> A telegram reached town last evening from Henry Jones, son of the late H R Jones, who was murdered at Booralga station, stating that he had recovered the horse, saddle, bridle, and rifle and ammunition stolen by the blackboy on the morning his father was murdered. Little doubt was entertained that this blackboy murdered the unfortunate owner of Koolburra.<sup>469</sup> Cooktown, April 24. The Supreme Court, the aboriginal boy Joker charged with the murder of H R Jones, at Booralga, in August 1890, the Judge instructed the jury to acquit the prisoner, as there was no proof of his age, which at most was twelve years, and there was no evidence of malice. This case was considered a miscarriage of justice, as Joker confessed that he shot Jones because he thought Jones was going to shoot him next morning.<sup>470</sup>

Donald Lang was robbed at the Nobbies by the blacks, and a Chinaman was murdered lower down the river. Sub-Inspector Poingdestre started from Highbury station on receipt of the news, and came across the blacks near Maytown where one rifle was recovered. The Sub-Inspector was in hot pursuit to recover the remaining stolen firearms.<sup>471</sup> A rifle and revolver were recovered, the latter fully charged. The rifle belonged to Donald Lang who was recently stuck up by a mob of Normanby or Thornborough blacks and his hut looted.<sup>472</sup>

Inspector F J Murray wired the Commissioner of Police from Cooktown, on 12 November that a packer named Michael Wholahan (aka Alligator Mick) died in the Maytown Hospital on 9 November from injuries inflicted by a black boy in his employ. He was found unconscious and died in that condition.<sup>473</sup> Harry, an Aboriginal, was charged, on warrant issued by the Maytown Bench, with the wilful murder of Michael Wholahan, Laura, on 4 November 1890. Description: A native Myall, 5 feet 7 inches high, slight build, leather strap on wrist of right hand.<sup>474</sup>

Cooktown, February 25, 1891. Harry charged with the murder of Alligator Mick at Maytown, was further remanded for the production of the warrant.<sup>475</sup> Maytown, March 17. Harry charged with the murder of Alligator Mick (Wholahan), was brought before the police magistrate here. No evidence was offered. Harry was now under the care of the native police, and his ultimate fate would probably be that of a deserter. It was elicited, through an interpreter, that Mick commenced beating Harry, who retaliated by seizing a small tomahawk and striking him on the head. The row originated in the boy taking too long carrying water up from the creek.<sup>476</sup>

<sup>467</sup> Northern Miner 26 August 1890 p 3.

<sup>468</sup> Northern Miner 5 September 1890 p 3.

<sup>469</sup> Queenslander 6 September 1890 p 480.

<sup>470</sup> Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 25 April 1891 p 4. QPG 1891 p 207.

<sup>471</sup> Morning Bulletin 22 August 1890 p 5.

<sup>472</sup> Brisbane Courier 15 September 1890 p 7.QSA ITM289937, letter from Mr Rene, 24 July 1890, Wortham Park.

<sup>473</sup> Telegraph 13 November 1890 p 4.

<sup>474</sup> QPG Vol. XXVII] 13 December 1890 [No. 50, p 1271.

<sup>475</sup> Northern Mining Register 4 March 1891 p 5.

<sup>476</sup> Queenslander 4 April 1891 p 630. Brisbane Courier 28 March 1891 p 6.

The *Herberton Advertiser*, a rough account of the murders perpetrated by the blacks at Wooroora:

Business matters took me to Mr Geo. Robinson's station on 16 February, and there I met Mr F Robinson, who asked me to go back to Wooroora the following day, to see the blacks. I did so, but on our arrival there, we were horrified to see the house burnt to the ground, and the charred remains of a black boy called Ned, and a human skull, burned beyond recognition, but which afterwards proved to belong to another boy called Ningi. The former came from the Logan District, and had been in Mr Robinson's employ for eight years. The boy Ningi belongs to Boar's Pocket,<sup>477</sup> and had been with Mr Robinson for six years.

The evening before leaving the scene of the murder, Ned's gin came in, and said she escaped from the rest of the blacks and ventured to give some account of the massacre. She said "Blackfellows askem Ned, What for you no bin give plenty bullocky all the same before? Altogether boy plenty hungry. Fellow Ned been say "No more gotem beef here; Master bi-me-by come up, killem bullocky, belong you altogether." Then blackfellow say—"What for you yabber gammon?" The mob then rushed him, and took his revolver, chopped him across the throat, and battered his head in with a large auger. The boy Ningi was asleep, but the noise awoke him, and he tried to make his escape. One of the blackfellows said—"No good let em Ningi run away; that fellow bi-me-by go along master and yabber killem Ned." They then caught him; cut his head off with a saw, and threw it into the fire; and carried his body together with Ned's legs, about five miles, when they roasted and ate it. They also took all the things, including rifle, revolver, saddles, tools, cooking utensils, &c out of the house, and carried them away, after which they set fire to the house, and burned it to the ground. The police officer and troopers from Nigger Creek arrived on the 19th, and buried what was left of the two boys, and then started in pursuit of the blacks, but had not returned when I left.<sup>478</sup>

Tate River, May 28. The black troopers (Mr Charles Hansen in charge) made their appearance as the blacks were very bad, killing cattle at the Bolwarra station.<sup>479</sup>

A correspondent telegraphed from Woodleigh Station, via Herberton, on 12 April as follows:

At Coolgarra great hopes are entertained of the mill starting soon. Some reefs worked there would pay to have the ore packed seven miles. The blacks have been giving some trouble by thieving from the miners' camps at California Creek, and at the camps of the stream tin miners between the Tate and Walsh Rivers. The native police, under Constable Hansen, are patrolling the district and doing good service. Cattle have been speared in numbers at Wooroora, and some systematic mode of handling the blacks should now be put into practice.<sup>480</sup>

Cairns, September 3, 1890. Bismark and Darkie were captured by Constable Hansen and brought into Cairns. They were charged at the Police Court. Constable Hansen also recovered the rifle and cartridges stolen from the murdered man.<sup>481</sup> Cairns, September 11. At the Police Court, Bismark was discharged but Darkie was committed for trial.<sup>482</sup> A reward of £10 to Constable Charles Hansen, Reg. No. 421, for capturing the murderers of George Hobson at Barron River.<sup>483</sup> Cairns, April 2, 1891. The Circuit Court before Mr Justice Chubb, Darkie, an Aboriginal, was indicted for the murder of George Hobson at Myola, on the Barron River on or about 19 July 1890. His Honour in directing the jury said the accused was a British subject and the jury had to give him just as careful a trial as a white man. The jury had to be perfectly satisfied about the confession; if not, they were required to give the prisoner the benefit of the doubt. The scales must go up in the

<sup>477</sup> Danbulla, Qld 4872.

<sup>478</sup> Morning Bulletin 17 March 1890 p 6.

<sup>479</sup> Queenslander 14 June 1890 p 1135.

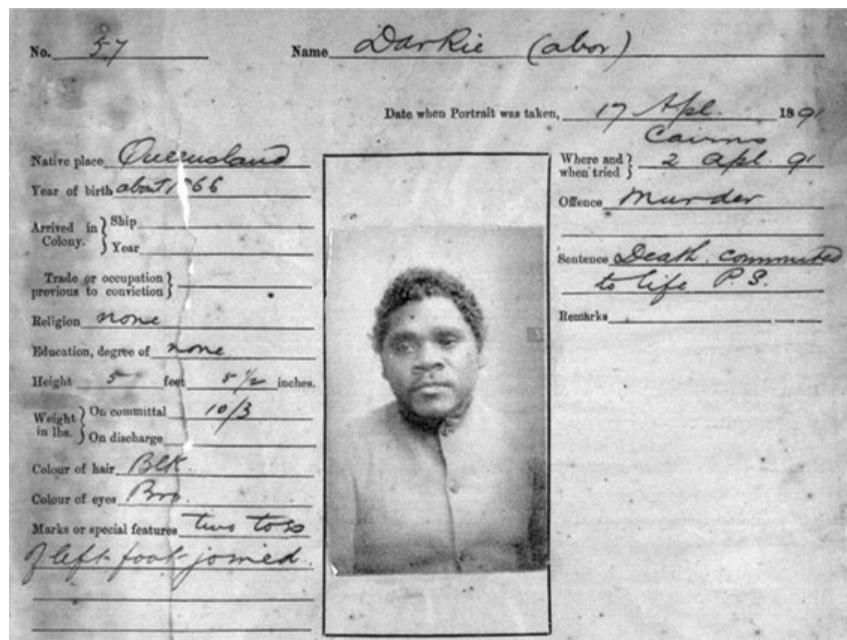
<sup>480</sup> Brisbane Courier 22 April 1890 p 4.

<sup>481</sup> Brisbane Courier 3 September 1890 p 5. QSA ITM2730541. Queenslander 19 September 1891 p 572. Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia 1788-1930, <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.13/1340762> (accessed 27/06/2024).

<sup>482</sup> Brisbane Courier 12 September 1890 p 5.

<sup>483</sup> Qld PG Vol. XXVII] 13 December 1890 [No. 50 p 394.

balance before they found him guilty; there must be a preponderance of evidence. The jury retired at 1.45 and the Court adjourned for lunch for half an hour. On resuming, the jury returned at 2.30 and gave their verdict of "Guilty." The prisoner had nothing to say, only he did not do it. The Judge passed sentence of death upon the prisoner.<sup>484</sup> The Executive commuted the sentence of death to imprisonment for life.<sup>485</sup> Darkie was then conveyed to Her Majesty's prison at St Helena. During his time at St Helena, Darkie made several petitions to the Governor for early release from prison. His final petition was on 17 July 1899 which indicated that on Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, his sentence was further commuted to 12 years' penal servitude. However, the government rejected Darkie's petition for remission of sentence. On Her Majesty's Jubilee of 1900, after serving 9 years, Darkie was released to Fraser Island conditioned he reside there. Darkie escaped from Fraser Island in 1902 and returned to Cairns where he was arrested. He was escorted back to Fraser Island but, pending transport to the island, he was lodged in the Maryborough watchhouse where he was diagnosed as syphilitic and treated by the local government doctor. Mr Meston, Southern Protector, intervened and Darkie was placed at Durundur.<sup>486</sup>



QSA ITM662646 DR17743.

Brisbane, December 3. The Commissioner of Police received news from Thornborough, dated the 1<sup>st</sup> inst., that two Aboriginals were seriously wounded by bullets and taken to hospital. Their dying depositions were taken and John W Cowley and Felix Duffy were arrested. Sub-Inspector Lamond interviewed several of the tribe who all agreed that besides the two wounded Aboriginals, two others had been shot, one of these being a female who died. The other was almost dead. The latter was carried away on a pack horse by Duffy and Crowley and buried. A detachment of native police with constables and a guide was sent to search for the bodies. They found the body of the female at Mitchell River. The body was taken to Thornborough, and a search for the dead blackfellow was continued. Meanwhile, Crowley and Duffy were charged at Thornborough with shooting Aboriginals. All the witnesses were Aboriginals, and it was necessary to obtain an interpreter. The police obtained permission to engage Mr Warren, the well-known interpreter, who could not, however, reach Thornborough for about a week. The bench refused to grant a remand for eight days as none of the Aboriginals understood the native oath. The Commissioner for Police

<sup>484</sup> Cairns Post 4 April 1891 p 2. Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 4 April 1891 p 5. Qld PG Vol. XXVIII] 9 May 1891 [No. 19 p 207. QSA ITM3626927 DR124178.

<sup>485</sup> Cairns Post 16 May 1891 p 3.

<sup>486</sup> QSA ITM17981 DR81522 Pt 1 pp 106-135; DR81523 Pt 2 pp 1-14.

brought the matter under the notice of the Colonial Secretary. Tozer gave instructions to hold an enquiry adding that he was of the opinion the men should be re-arrested if the evidence was at all clear.<sup>487</sup>

Thornborough. Dick, an Aboriginal, was charged on a warrant issued by the Thornborough Bench, with disobeying a summons to appear before them on 12 January as a witness in the Queen v. John Wm. Crowley and Felix Duffy charged with shooting Aboriginals. Dick was about 14 years of age, 4 feet 3 inches high; wore moleskin trousers, check shirt, soft tweed hat.<sup>488</sup>

Brisbane, 15 January. The matter was reported to the Colonial Secretary, who instructed the Police Magistrate at Herberton, Mr Zillman, who was in Brisbane at the time, to make a searching inquiry into the matter. On his return, Zillman wired to the Colonial Secretary on the 7th inst., from Ingham, stating that Felix Duffy had been re-arrested for shooting with intent to murder Jimmy, an Aboriginal, at the Mitchell River, and remanded until the 12th inst. He reported that the prisoner was unwell and had been in Thornborough since before his previous arrest, and recommended that bail be allowed. On the 13th instant, Zillman wired as follows to the Colonial Secretary: Re the shooting of blacks at the Mitchell River, Crowley and Duffy were re-arrested and charged with shooting with intent to murder one Jimmy, an Aboriginal. The case was partly heard, and a remand for eight days was granted on the application of Sub-Inspector Lamond for the production of witnesses. Warrants were issued for the arrest of two witnesses. The case would be fully investigated.<sup>489</sup> Two men named Crowley and Duffy were committed for trial.<sup>490</sup> A No true bill (not prosecute) was filed against Duffy and Crowley.<sup>491</sup>

## **E — KENNEDY.**

Constable P W Crane wired from Pentland to the Commissioner of Police, that an Aboriginal named Billy was murdered by the blacks on 18 April. They buried the body, which the police afterwards found. Combo and Bobby were arrested, and two others were still at large.<sup>492</sup> Combo and Bobby were tried at the Charters Towers Circuit Court on 8 October 1890 and found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to one year's hard labour.<sup>493</sup>

## **F — MITCHELL.**

Senior-Constable Kelly, of Cloncurry wired the Commissioner on 2 August, that Mr John Hopkins, of Granada station had informed the police magistrate that John Rowe, a dog poisoner had been murdered by blacks while skinning a sheep. The murder was committed about 16 miles from Granada. The body was still unburied. A constable and black tracker started for the scene.<sup>494</sup> August 9, Constable Hourigan wired from Donaldson "having buried the body of John Rowe killed by blacks on Leichhardt, no chance of tracking murderers at present. Shall I go myself, or take any further steps?"<sup>495</sup> Freeman and Bull, Aboriginals, were charged on a warrant issued by the Cloncurry Bench with the wilful murder of John Rowe at Grenada, on about 17 July 1890.

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<sup>487</sup> Mackay Mercury 9 December 1890 p 3. Queenslander 13 December 1890 p 1118. Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 9 December 1890 p 2. Northern Miner 10 December 1890 p 3.

<sup>488</sup> Qld PG Vol. XXVIII] 21 February 1891 [No. 8 p 127.

<sup>489</sup> Daily Northern Argus 16 January 1891 p 3.

<sup>490</sup> Brisbane Courier 28 January 1891 p 4.

<sup>491</sup> Brisbane Courier 27 February 1891 p 4. Daily Northern Argus 28 February 1891 p 5.

<sup>492</sup> Brisbane Courier 22 April 1890 p 4.

<sup>493</sup> Northern Miner 13 October 1890 p 3. See QPG 1890 p 363, please note typo, murder should read manslaughter.

<sup>494</sup> Telegraph 4 August 1890 p 5.

<sup>495</sup> Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 12 August 1890 p 5. Queenslander 16 August 1890 p 293.

Description: 1st. About 22 years of age, large mouth, 5 feet 8 inches high, moustache; speaks English well. There was no description given of the other man.<sup>496</sup> Wardens Reports, Cloncurry: Extensive migration to any portion of this distant auriferous area has been checked owing to recent depredations by the blacks, who, incited by the partially civilised station hands, have culminated their deeds of violence by the deliberate murder of John Rowe on Prospector Creek.

## G — BURKE.

Inspector Douglas, of Normanton, reported to the Commissioner of Police: Senior-Constable Hawley, of Burketown, reported the body of gin, about 14 years old, found on the bank of Albert River, strapped by wire to a piece of tire iron. Suspicion of murder pointed to a Singhalese and two white women who were arrested.<sup>497</sup>

The Commissioner for Police has received the following telegram from Sub-Inspector Galbraith, Georgetown, dated April 21:

Edward Parker was speared yesterday by a blackboy at Sandy Creek, half-a-mile from Georgetown. The blackboy was arrested by the police. Parker's life is not in danger.<sup>498</sup>

# 1891

## D DIVISION — COOK.

Wm. George  
Crystalbrook Station, Tate River  
3 January 1891

I wired for police protection four months ago against blacks killing my cattle. No notice appears to be taken of such wire applications to the heads of the department, hence my reason for taking this step for publicity. My cattle, and those of Dixon, Brodie, and Ferguson, not to mention numerous others, have been destroyed by the blacks with impunity. A patrol arrived over three months after my application for the same and Mr Hansen, who is in charge of the police, does good work in protecting our property and lives whilst here, but his visit is short; the blacks know of his departures and whereabouts so well that they recommence their raids almost immediately after his leaving the district. A native police station should be formed at the Tate River, near the telegraph office, for the protection of this large district, taking in all the country between Georgetown, Palmerville, Thornborough, Montalbion, and Californian Greek, which is at present unprotected. This has been promised, so I understand, and a station of the native police is necessary here, as it is the worst district in the North for black depredations. If such is overlooked, we must protect ourselves and ignore the law, which affords no redress, let alone protection. I hope this will be taken notice of, as such affairs as the Williams skull breaking case by the blacks is not to be forgotten or let at rest. I am mustering my cattle to-day; some were got with broken spears in them.<sup>499</sup>

<sup>496</sup> QPG Vol. XXVII] 6 September 1890 [No. 36, p 304.

<sup>497</sup> Queenslander 1 March 1890 p 389.

<sup>498</sup> Telegraph 22 April 1890 p 5.

<sup>499</sup> Queenslander 10 January 1891 p 58.

Maytown, May 11. On or about 7 May, a Chinaman named Ah Gow was missing from his garden, situated four miles from Palmerville; his body was found in a waterhole bearing spear wounds and with the skull tomahawked. The local blacks said the deed was done by blacks from the Thornborough district, notably the Mount Mulligan tribe. The humpy was looted as well, and a gun, revolver, and ammunition were taken. Constable O'Callaghan and a black tracker discovered the body.<sup>500</sup>

Cooktown, May 18, 1891. The blacks were spearing cattle at Breeza Plains, the property of Mr Balser. Meanwhile, there were eight native police at the Laura doing nothing, Constable Smith was unable to leave the camp, as Inspector Murray had taken the campkeeper on escort duty. The Government promised to establish a camp at the Kennedy River, but it has not yet been done.<sup>501</sup> A native police camp was established at Musgrave in 1891 instead to protect both the telegraphic line and the cattle stations on the Kennedy River.<sup>502</sup>

Cooktown, November 3. A Chinaman named Long Chong was speared at Palmerville by blacks, several spears entered his body. He was taken to the Maytown Hospital, where he died while the last spear was extracted.<sup>503</sup> Maytown, April 4, 1892. The arrest of Billy, an Aboriginal mate of Mingo, on his committal for the murder of Long Chong rids the district of a villain. Cadet Cooper surrounded the blacks' camp near the town, having previously arranged with the "king" for his capture. No great difficulty attended the arrest. There was a general wail of sorrow in the camp in the night amongst the gins. The civilised blacks, i.e. those who frequent the town, were very glad of Billy's arrest. This arrest may allow the police to determine whether the two arrested were the perpetrators of all the recent murders of Chinese. A native police camp was formed near Palmerville, at Fairlight, about thirty miles from the town.<sup>504</sup>

# 1892

## D DIVISION — COOK.

Maytown, February 29. Another murder was committed by the Palmerville blacks; they killed a Chinaman named Sup Gee about seven miles up the river. No particulars were to hand. Troopers and white police were in pursuit.<sup>505</sup> A telegram was received by the Commissioner of Police from Cooktown in which it was stated that some blacks had killed Sup Gee, a Chinaman, some miles from Palmerville, towards Maytown, on the 25th instant. Constables Murray and Regan, with native police, left Maytown to investigate the matter.<sup>506</sup> With reference to the murder of Sup Gee, the body has not been found. The blacks looted the hut, and traces of them were observable about the locality. The Chinese residents were sending a petition to the Government for the re-establishment of a native police camp at Palmerville. During twelve months, five Chinamen have been killed by the blacks.<sup>507</sup>

<sup>500</sup> Queenslander 16 May 1891 p 960, 23 May 1891 p 966.

<sup>501</sup> Brisbane Courier 19 May 1891 p 5 & Queenslander 23 May 1891 p 1008. QSA ITM847398, 91/8264.

<sup>502</sup> QSA ITM289937.

<sup>503</sup> Brisbane Courier 4 November 1891 p 5.

<sup>504</sup> Brisbane Courier 16 April 1892 p 3. QPG 1892 p 180.

<sup>505</sup> Brisbane Courier 11 March 1892 p 2.

<sup>506</sup> Telegraph 27 February 1892 p 9.

<sup>507</sup> Brisbane Courier 11 March 1892 p 2.

Cooktown, February 29. The blacks raided Kalkah Station stealing everything. The Musgrave police were in pursuit.<sup>508</sup>

Inspector Fitzgerald, stationed at Cooktown, wired to the Commissioner of Police that the gold warden at Maytown had found his black tracker dead in the storeroom with a bullet wound in the shoulder. An official investigation was to be held.<sup>509</sup>

# 1893

## D DIVISION — COOK.

The following information regarding an outrage by blacks has been wired from Cooktown to the Commissioner of Police:

Cadet Cooper reported from Mein that Charles Neatman had stated to him that while camped near the head of the Lochart River on 3 January last the blacks rushed the camp and speared two of the party named William Tucker and Charles Lawrence. Lawrence was badly injured in the lungs and had since then been seriously ill. Cadet Cooper stated that Lawrence would be taken to Hayes Creek to meet next week's steamer for Cooktown.<sup>510</sup>

Cooktown, May 20. John Davis sent a blackboy named Smoke, aged about fourteen years, to look for lost horses. The boy was met by Normanby blacks, who cut his throat, severed his hands and feet from his body, and then burned the mutilated remains. Davis was informed of the murder by the blacks, and communicated with the Inspector of Police, who despatched black trackers. They surprised the blacks in camp near Mount Cook and found Smoke's remains as above mentioned. They were now in pursuit of the murderers.<sup>511</sup>

Geraldton, January 30. William Kelloway, a single man who recently worked a gang of thirty-six Aboriginals cutting cane at the Innisfail plantation, was killed by the blacks. Kelloway left Geraldton in an open boat with twelve Aboriginals bound for the Tully River. The boat was found in Mourilyan Harbour, broken up, and an Aboriginal reported to a selector on the Cardwell-road that a party of myalls, of which he was one, killed Kelloway. The police were inquiring into the matter.<sup>512</sup>

A Geraldton telegram of 10 March said:

An inquiry was held to-day into the murder of William Kelloway by the Aboriginals. Evidence was given by participants in the murder which showed that Kelloway was stooping over his boat, which was then drawn up on the beach at Hetty Bay, when he was struck by four of his boat's crew and killed. He shot one myall before being overpowered. The murder was reported by the wounded

<sup>508</sup> Northern Miner 1 March 1892 p 3.

<sup>509</sup> Brisbane Courier 18 May 1892 p 4.

<sup>510</sup> Queenslander 11 March 1893 p 474.

<sup>511</sup> Morning Bulletin 23 May 1893 p 5 & Brisbane Courier 23 May 1893 p 5. Queenslander 27 May 1893 p 1002. North Queensland Register 31 May 1893 p 9.

<sup>512</sup> Queenslander 4 February 1893 p 193.

blackfellow. Mr Moran, police magistrate, and the health officer visited the scene of the murder and found the body buried in a hole underneath a log.<sup>513</sup>

## **E — KENNEDY.**

Court House, Cardwell, 28 April 1893, Heinrich Scheu deposed:

I am the boarding house keeper residing at Cardwell. I know the gin, Maggie. She was in my employ as a washerwoman on the evening of 17 April 1893. I also know the Aboriginal, Policeman. I saw the gin coming in the back door; just as she came to the door, I saw a spear thrown into her. I rushed to the door, looked out and saw Policeman turning away with one or more spears in his hand. I then pulled the spear out of the gin's left side a little below the left hip, at the top of the groin. The wound was very small but the spear had passed nearly through her body. I drew about seven inches of the spear out of her body. There had been a quarrel between the deceased and Policeman. She had more than once refused to go to the camp with him. The gin had stated that she would be killed if she returned to the camp. After the senior-constable arrived, the gin stated in his presence and in mine that Policeman threw the spear. The black I have seen in the lockup is the person who threw the spear. She died on 28 April 1893.<sup>514</sup>

Townsville, June 12. Before Mr Justice Real of the Supreme Court, an Aboriginal named Caraba, alias Policeman, was found guilty of unlawfully wounding. The evidence showed that the prisoner speared his gin who died ten days afterwards. He was sentenced to two years' hard labour.<sup>515</sup>

Rockhampton September 20. Ward, for the murder of Charley, an Aboriginal at Elderslie station in April last, was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment for manslaughter. Mr Justice Harding said if the jury had not recommended Ward to mercy he would have sentenced him to imprisonment for life. September 27, in the Supreme Court before Mr Justice Harding, Thomas Moffitt, a half-caste for the murder of a piccaninny at Springsure was found guilty of manslaughter. The jury retired at 3 o'clock, returning at 4. The sentence was penal servitude for life.<sup>516</sup>

## **G — BURKE.**

A C Haldane, police magistrate in Georgetown wired the Colonial Secretary on 21 January 1893: "Native gin killed by black Aboriginal in their camp with a nulla nulla none but native evidence procurable; should I have the body exhumed and take proceedings in matter". Colonial Secretary replied, take no action.<sup>517</sup>

Boko, a tracker, belonging to the police station at Camooweal, goes to Normanton on a charge of murder. Boko arrived from the O'Shaughnessy, where his gin said that Toby (one of Mr Beaumont's blackboys) had interfered with her. When Boko heard this, he procured a butcher's knife, and laid in wait for Toby. Boko called to him to come and shake hands. Toby came and Boko taking his hand, twisted him round, and drove the knife into his back, just under the shoulder blade, at the same time drawing the knife diagonally across the back making a cut five inches long. Boko then told Toby to go on and not come interfering with his gin again. Boko was arrested on the charge of malicious wounding. Toby died, and the charge was altered to that of wilful murder. Boko pleaded guilty.<sup>518</sup>

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<sup>513</sup> Cairns Post 18 March 1893 p 2.

<sup>514</sup> QSA ITM2732069 DR85291

<sup>515</sup> Queenslander 17 June 1893 p 1105.

<sup>516</sup> Morning Bulletin 29 September 1893 p 5.

<sup>517</sup> QSA ITM847453 DR69985, 93/850.

<sup>518</sup> Northern Miner 29 December 1893 p 3. QSA ITM847485 DR60666, 93/13527

# 1894

## D DIVISION — COOK.

The telegraph superintendent at Bowen wired, on 2 May, to the superintendent in Brisbane as follows:

The line repairer in charge at Mein reports: Two men, Rodgers and Watson, reached here this afternoon. They were badly speared by blacks on Friday morning last at Bairdsville. A miner named Baird was also attacked and is supposed to be dead. The blacks have taken one Martini rifle and a revolver, with cartridges. Have wired Inspector Fitzgerald, Cooktown; also, Sub-Inspector Cooper, Coen.<sup>519</sup>

May 8. Inspector Fitzgerald received a telegram this afternoon from Sub-Inspector Cooper stating that he had found the body of the prospector, Bill Baird, at his camp at the Batavia River. He had been speared in two places, one spear having entered above the breast-bone and passed through the lower part of the back, while the second spear was in the right side. The police will leave the Mein Telegraph Station to-morrow with the two men who were wounded at the time Baird was killed, and will proceed to Hayes Creek, where they will be met by the cutter *Mystery*, and the men will be put on board the *Maranoa* or the *Albatross*.<sup>520</sup>

Cooktown, May 21. The *Albatross* arrived this morning from Stewart River, bringing Sub-Inspector Cooper, Mrs Cooper, and family, and the wounded man R Rogers, who was recently speared by blacks at the Batavia River. Jim Watson, the other wounded man, remains at the Coen. Rogers was conveyed to the hospital here. The spear entered above his left hip and passed through his body. The broken spear was extracted with much difficulty by Sub-Inspector Cooper; Rogers was in a precarious condition.<sup>521</sup>

The *Cooktown Courier* reported that the Musgrave police, in charge of Senior Constable Whiteford, with the black boy Romeo, captured the headman of the tribe who murdered Bill Baird, and recovered the firearms and ammunition stolen. The natives had not used the ammunition, as it was unsuitable for the firearms they seized.<sup>522</sup>

Cook District Blacks. A correspondent of the *Cooktown Independent* of 23 June reported:

Quite recently Rokeby station was blockaded by 200 blacks, who held corroborees and toasted on Mr Massey's cattle, while he and a black assistant had to fortify themselves in the home station for several days until other hands returned from mustering, when a sally and dispersal took place. Nott's station, on the Archer, had also been raided by swarms of hostile blacks, some of whom were concerned in the murder of Baird on the Batavia. Cattle and horses were being speared with impunity on almost every station about 60 to 100 miles from a police camp. The ex-troopers and Christian converts from the mission stations, who recently rejoined the tribes, were teaching them the use of arms, which they had stolen along with several hundred cartridges from camps and boats along the coast.<sup>523</sup>

<sup>519</sup> Brisbane Courier 4 May 1894 p 5. Telegraph 4 May 1894 p 5. Northern Miner 4 May 1894 p 4.

<sup>520</sup> Queenslander 12 May 1894 p 871. Capricornian 12 May 1894 p 23.

<sup>521</sup> Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 22 May 1894 p 2. Brisbane Courier 16 June 1894 p 3.

<sup>522</sup> Telegraph 13 June 1894 p 4.

<sup>523</sup> Telegraph 2 July 1894 p 2.

Montalbion, September 6. Constables Lanigan and McLaughlin were endeavouring to capture a notorious blackboy known as Jackey Norman and met with considerable resistance. McLaughlin's revolver in the struggle was caught and fired by Jackey, who shot Lanigan dead. Jackey was still at large.<sup>524</sup>

On 8 November 1894, S F Balser of Breeza Plains, Cooktown wired the Colonial Secretary requesting that Inspector Fitzgerald send the native police to Breeza because the "blacks are spearing cattle with impunity". Mr Tozer replied that the Commissioner had been requested to take action.<sup>525</sup>

## G — BURKE, NORMANTON.

Thos. McLean, a stockman on Delta Station, was charged with murdering an Aboriginal named Billy about 3 March, and George David Ferguson stockman, for aiding and abetting. Sergeant Kennedy found a log burned through and small pieces of bones in the fire. He saw dray-wheel tracks and tracked them to a creek. He then sent in blackboys to search, who drew out a quantity of bones. The blacks informed Sergeant Kennedy that the accused man shot the boy, and Ferguson and he then burnt the body, and afterwards carried away in the dray the bones that did not burn and threw them into the creek.<sup>526</sup> Normanton, May 7. Mr Justice Cooper arrived in the *Vigilant* and held a sitting of the Supreme Court. McLean's case of shooting an Aboriginal at Mentana was adjourned till the next sittings so that an interpreter could be obtained from Townsville for the witnesses who were all Aboriginals. The judge would not allow bail, but an application would be made to the Minister for Justice.<sup>527</sup> *Regina v. McLean, ex parte Thomas McLean* summons for a summon to admit to bail, Mr MacDonald (of Messrs MacDonald and O'Malley agents for Mr V. Tabart) for the summons. Order as per application summons, returnable before Mr Justice Cooper on 10 August 1895.<sup>528</sup>

Mr Alex. McDonald, stockman, arrived in town (*Norman Chronicle* of 4 April) with the news that an elderly man named Ferguson, an employee of Mr Donald McIntyre, for some twenty years on Dalganally station, and who lately went to Mentana station, was speared there by a blackboy about seven days ago. The boy waited until he saw the manager, Mr Du Moulin, leave the station, and prowled about until Ferguson came outside the house. Then, as the unfortunate man turned his back, the savage drove a fish spear with four prongs into his back, just above the right shoulder blade. Ferguson immediately scrambled into the house, where a rifle and a revolver were lying on the table, but fell, and was too weak to rise again. The black, knowing he had seriously injured the man, ran up to finish him off, but was prevented by a civilised gin at the house, who sang out to him that he had killed Ferguson. The boy then decamped. When Du Moulin returned, he extracted two barbs, but the other two were so far in that the unfortunate man could not suffer them to be drawn out until McDonald came along, and he, after some difficulty, extracted them. Ferguson was in great agony and was breathing through the wounds in his back. Du Moulin made an African chair and thought with the aid of the blacks camped near the station to carry Ferguson into town, but after he had been carried a few hundred yards it was seen the task would never be accomplished, and the sufferer was brought back to the station. McDonald then went on foot to Delta station, where he got a horse to ride into town for assistance, but owing to the flooded state of the country he had to walk the greater part of the way. [On inquiry at the office of the

<sup>524</sup> Brisbane Courier 7 September 1894 p 5. See p 194 below.

<sup>525</sup> QSA ITM847516 DR63848, 94/12905.

<sup>526</sup> Northern Miner 24 March 1894 p 3.

<sup>527</sup> Northern Miner 8 May 1894 p 3.

<sup>528</sup> Northern Miner 13 July 1894 p 3. What happened to McLean is undiscoverable.

Commissioner of Police, we learnt that Ferguson had died. Efforts were being made to arrest the blackfellow. Ed.]<sup>529</sup>

Inspector Graham, accompanied by Dr Cunningham, police and trackers arrived at the coast a few miles from Mentana in the *Vigilant*, at noon on 11 May. At the time they arrived, there were fully 100 blacks on the shore who disappeared on the dingy being lowered. They found Du Moulin alone or at any rate with a small gin. He had been speared through the left shoulder but had recovered. He told them that one horse and fifteen head of cattle had been speared by the blacks but the delinquents had cleared out to an adjacent island. The doctor then rode back to the *Vigilant* and returned to Normanton, leaving Inspector Graham, two constables, and two black trackers to search for the murderer of Ferguson.<sup>530</sup>

The Colonial Secretary received a report from Constable Ryan, stationed at Boulia, that Mr Bonner, of Carandotta, had reported that Walter Nathan was killed by blacks at Walayah on 2 September. Walayah is about 40 miles from Carandotta. The murderers crossed into the Northern Territory, and men were sent in pursuit.<sup>531</sup> On 6 November, Wilinjera, an Aboriginal, was charged before Messrs Fielding, Coghlan, and Cush, JPs at Boulia, with the wilful murder of Walter Byron Nathan at Walayah, on 2 September 1894. The prisoner was committed for trial on the capital charge, and the witnesses were bound over to appear at the assizes to be held at Rockhampton in April 1895.<sup>532</sup> Supreme Court, Rockhampton, 23 April 1895, before His Honour Mr Justice Harding, Mr Power presented an indictment against Walinjera, a member of the Uranna tribe, for the murder of Walter Byron Nathan. Mr Power: I quite agree with your Honour that Archie is not a competent (interpreter); but, at the same time, I cannot hold out any hope that we can get a better. I enter a nolle prosequi. His Honour: Yes. That is a good plan. I am satisfied a right trial could not be had. There is no other charge against the prisoner? Mr Power: No. His Honour: He is discharged. Walinjera then left the box.<sup>533</sup>

# 1895

## D DIVISION — COOK.

Maytown, June 10. The body of a Chinese miner, working about three-quarters of a mile from his hut on the left-hand branch of the Palmer River, was found a few yards from where he had been working. The body was covered up with stones; the head battered in and presented a most ghastly sight. It seemed the unfortunate man had been missing for several days. His mates reported the matter to the police and stated the blacks had killed him. From marks on the body and head, the weapon used appeared to have been a tomahawk. Yu Kee was the murdered man's name, and he was well known to Europeans. The motive for the crime was revenge. The deceased or some of his mates had poisoned a quantity of flour and left it so the blacks could easily obtain possession. One died and many became very sick. On Friday, three blacks nearly killed another Chinaman who was in charge of a hut, his mates working in a claim a short distance away. The man's cry for help brought some of the party up, not before he was prostrated by a blow from a nulla nulla. The man

<sup>529</sup> Brisbane Courier 27 April 1894 p 5.

<sup>530</sup> Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser 7 June 1894 p 5.

<sup>531</sup> Telegraph 8 September 1894 p 5.

<sup>532</sup> Western Champion and General Advertiser for the Central-Western Districts 27 November 1894 p 8. QSA ITM2732809 DR85501.

<sup>533</sup> Capricornian 27 April 1895 p 10. QPG 1895 p 200 (aka Mullingera).

was in a critical state. Constable Brennan proceeded in search of one of the blacks who could be identified—a partially civilised boy. Wah Chong, a Chinese merchant, made formal complaints on behalf of his countrymen as to depredations by the blacks, culminating in murder. Several notorious blacks were at large, keeping some little distance outside the town. The Palmer was the rendezvous of several tribes who came from Saltwater Creek, Union Camp, Hodgkinson, Upper and Lower Laura. What was required was a sharp, active officer, a good bushman and three or four really good trackers, brought from Southern districts, whose duty would be to patrol once a week. It was rumoured the Chinese had been interfering with the women. The body of Yu Kee, when found by Senior Constable Connolly, presented a frightful appearance, mutilated, but recognisable. The murderers interred the unfortunate fellow in the hole he had been working in. They also killed his dog, burying it some fifteen yards away. Mr Field, JP held an inquiry. The courthouse was crowded. Larry, an Aboriginal, was remanded for eight days for assaulting one Foo Shoo. Detachments of native police were now after the murderers of Yu Kee. The blacks in town say the brother of the blackfellow poisoned committed the deed.<sup>534</sup> No trace has been found of the murderers of Yu Kee. The native police returned stating that the blacks were quiet.<sup>535</sup>

The *Torres Straits Pilot* said:

Mr G Massey received a letter from his brother Harry from Rokeby station, Cape York Peninsula, 20 May, which stated that the station was attacked by blacks a few days previously. The station was unexpectedly attacked at night. Mr Massey and his blackboy were true in their aim as they retaliated with blue pills and the myalls were driven off. Daylight revealed two corpses near the house and another with two balls through it near the lagoon a short distance from the house. Determined to follow up his success, Mr Massey followed the blacks on horseback to the junction of the Coen and Archer Rivers and there further chastised them. Mr Massey was, like many Peninsula squatters, tired of calling for police aid, and dealt with his would-be murderers in a summary way. They will keep clear of Rokeby station for some time. They had on two occasions, attacked the station during the day, but this was the first instance in which they stuck it up by night, and they were handsomely repelled.<sup>536</sup>

Cairns, August 6. A Chinaman found dead near Mareeba was murdered by a blackboy, who was supposed to be hiding in the Clohesy Ranges. Mounted Constable Higgins and four trackers were in pursuit.<sup>537</sup>

Cooktown, October 22. Constable Whelan left with Bannon, father of the lost mailman, Pat Bannon, for the Laura, then onto Coen where a further search would be made.<sup>538</sup> Senior Constable Smith wired Inspector Fitzgerald as follows: "Coen, November 10. Returned to station last night. Found no further traces or relics of the missing boy. From information gathered from blacks conclude he was killed. Reporting by mail. Whiteford with Bannon will be at Musgrave tomorrow." Senior Constable Whiteford sent the following telegram to the Inspector: "Musgrave, November 18. Returned Musgrave am, Mr Bannon was satisfied his son was killed by the blacks. My report by letter."<sup>539</sup>

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<sup>534</sup> Brisbane Courier 21 June 1895 p 2. Northern Miner 29 June 1895 p 4.

<sup>535</sup> Brisbane Courier 29 July 1895 p 2.

<sup>536</sup> Brisbane Courier 9 July 1895 p 6. At Coen, Inspector Lamond and I parted company, and with Mr Glen Massey, of Rokeby station, on the South Archer, as a companion, and attended by two black troopers, I rode down to the east coast, making the Chester River early on the morning of 14 November, W E Parry-Okeden. Brisbane Courier 16 April 1897 p 6.

<sup>537</sup> Telegraph 7 August 1895 p 5.

<sup>538</sup> Week 25 October 1895 p 13.

<sup>539</sup> Brisbane Courier 21 December 1895 p 9.

## G — BURKE, NORMANTON.

Normanton, 25 March. Murtagh Sullivan for the murder of an Aboriginal, Jack-in-the-box, at Dunbar station, was brought before the court last week and remanded.<sup>540</sup> Normanton, 23 April. Murtagh Sullivan, charged with the murder of an Aboriginal 13 years old, at Dunbar Station, was acquitted, but re-arrested immediately afterwards on another charge.<sup>541</sup>

Normanton, 23 April. Two Aboriginals from Burketown were charged with the murder of a black gin and her child. George was convicted of manslaughter of Lucy and sentenced to imprisonment for life. The other, Daylight, for tomahawking the gin's half-caste picaninny, Topay, was sentenced to be hung.<sup>542</sup>

# 1896

## F DISTRICT — COOK SUB-DISTRICT.

Concerning the murder of Mr Donald McKenzie, the owner of Lakefield station on 29 April, the Commissioner of Police received the following wire, dated 30 April, from Inspector Lamond, at Cooktown:

Constable O'Regan and two troopers left the Laura this morning for Lakefield. Constable Wheelan and two troopers left Musgrave to-day for Breeza Plains and Lakefield. Constables Walker and Hardy, with eight troopers, have gone this morning by special train to Deighton, and will go thence on to Lakefield. The Maytown police will also be sent out. Lakefield station is at the head of the salt water on the Normanby River, and I have little doubt that McKenzie's murderers are the Princess Charlotte Bay blacks. If a boat could be sent to work with the land force, I believe that both McKenzie's murderers and the murderers of Frank Lee and party would be secured.<sup>543</sup>

Cooktown, June 3. Constable David Hardie returned by train yesterday from the Laura with the detachment of native police who had been despatched from Cooktown to meet the other detachments sent out in search of the murderers of the late Donald McKenzie. When out, the police came across the dead bodies of some blacks who had evidently died of poison. It was supposed that they were some of the murderers and had used the arsenic stolen after the murder from McKenzie's house, believing it to be baking powder. The detachment found in the native camp a rifle, ammunition, and two dampsers. From outside sources, it has been ascertained that the guilty tribe received just punishment.<sup>544</sup> Cooktown, June 12. Senior Constable Smith, with Constable Bateman and four trackers, who have been out to assist in the search for the murderers of Mr Donald McKenzie at Lakefield, returned in the cutter *Bullfrog* last night. The coast country to the north, as far as the Stewart River, was traversed, the party going up numerous rivers and communicating with parties sent overland, but the blacks disappeared whenever the police approached, and no traces of the murderers could be found, except a few articles that had belonged to Mr McKenzie were discovered in a native camp about sixty miles from the scene of the murder.

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<sup>540</sup> Northern Miner 26 March 1895 p 3.

<sup>541</sup> Northern Miner 24 April 1895 p 3. QPG 1895 p 321.

<sup>542</sup> Northern Miner 24 April 1895 p 3. QPG 1895 p 200.

<sup>543</sup> Brisbane Courier 5 May 1896 p 4.

<sup>544</sup> Queenslander 6 June 1896 p 1063. See p 194 below.

Mangrove swamps and rough country hampered the operations of the police. Senior Constable Smith was invalidated because of the rough work.<sup>545</sup>

The Commissioner of Police received information that a Chinaman named Ah Hing has been murdered by the blacks at Kennedy diggings near Palmerville.<sup>546</sup>

The native police from Badu, said the *Torres Straits Pilot*, brought in an aged Moa native who had given himself up for murdering one of his wives. The murderer's name is Scullmate, and his victim was a gin named Peeson. He recently married this young woman, but her affections were more for a younger native named Mango. On 26 May, Peeson and Mango started from the camp in quest of yams, but were followed by the jealous Scullmate. Mango, fearing trouble, ran away. Peeson was, however, bolder and told her husband with no sense of shame that she was going with Mango, who was her dear sweetheart. Scullmate there and then struck one blow at his supposed faithless wife and the tomahawk buried itself in her skull. She fell and was soon dead. Scullmate returned to the camp and broke down with a guilty conscience, sobbing very much. The natives went and brought the woman's body in and buried it; Mango was said to have witnessed the murder.<sup>547</sup> Scullmate was found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to five years' imprisonment.<sup>548</sup>

## F — CAIRNS SUB-DISTRICT.

On June 11, an altercation at the blacks' camp resulted in Tommy stabbing another black named Larry in the loins and killing him. The murderer at once made for Irvinebank, closely followed by Constable Griffin. The constable caught up with Tommy at about 10 o'clock at night in Mrs Hogsflesh's kitchen. The black had hidden himself under a dresser. Constable Griffin with the aid of Mr E Borghero arrested the black who was lodged in the lookup. Tommy was a blackfellow of evil repute, being a "perfect terror" to the women of the district.<sup>549</sup> Montalbion, 15 June. Tommy was remanded for eight days for murdering Larry, an Aboriginal. The cause was the disputed possession of a gin. At the Circuit Court, Cairns on 5 October 1896, on the charge of the murder of Larry by Tommy, a nolle prosequi was entered and Tommy was discharged.<sup>550</sup>

## G — BURKE SUB-DISTRICT.

On 17 January 1896, Inspector Graham, Normanton wired the Colonial Secretary:

Constable Alford stationed at Turn-Off Lagoon, Port Darwin Road wires me from Burketown, Mr McIntosh, Lawn Hill Station reported on 8 January that three myall gins came into the station 30 December last and told him that some white men and a gin had been murdered by Calvert River blacks somewhere to the west of Lawn Hill. Smith and party who left Turn-Off Lagoon on 19 October last to prospect head of Nicholson River, the supposed white men killed. The ranges and country are very rough. I have directed the Turn-Off Lagoon police to make all possible search and inquiries.<sup>551</sup>

Georgetown, January 4. Thomas Symes, 70 years of age, was charged at the police court with the murder of a black boy named Mick, at Dagworth station. The prisoner admitted to the arresting constable that he shot the boy because he had stolen beef and fowls. Symes also said that he could

<sup>545</sup> Brisbane Courier 13 June 1896 p 5. Telegraph 20 June 1896 p 2.

<sup>546</sup> Brisbane Courier 18 May 1896 p 4.

<sup>547</sup> Northern Miner 11 June 1896 p 2.

<sup>548</sup> QPG 1896 pp 209, 335.

<sup>549</sup> Telegraph 9 July 1896 p 8.

<sup>550</sup> Northern Miner 16 June 1896 p 2. QPG 1896 pp 223, 335.

<sup>551</sup> QSA ITM847533 DR66531, 96/891.

not bear to see the station robbed and that he afterwards burned the body to destroy the smell, and also because the dingoes were howling dismally. The evidence of three blacks was taken, after which the prisoner was remanded for a week.<sup>552</sup> Normanton, April 29. The Supreme Court, before Mr Justice Real, Thomas Symes, charged with the murder of a blackboy, was tried, and a verdict of "Not guilty" returned.<sup>553</sup>

# 1897

## E DISTRICT — KENNEDY SUB-DISTRICT.

Townsville, March 7, 1898. At the Criminal Sittings of the Circuit Court before Mr Justice Chub, Willie and Jenny were tried for the murder of Minnie, an Aboriginal gin, on McConnell station on 9 November 1897. Jenny was acquitted and Willie was found guilty, with a recommendation to mercy on the ground of provocation by the unfaithfulness of the deceased. Mr McNaughton, who defended the prisoners, urged that the custom of the Aboriginals made death for desertion by a gin arbitrary. Willie was formally sentenced to death.<sup>554</sup>

## F — COOK SUB-DISTRICT.

April 6, 1897. Reports from the Coen and Mein districts stated that the blacks were more troublesome than ever, and cattle were being speared daily.<sup>555</sup>

Inspector Lamond, 7 April 1897 wired the Commissioner:

Sgt Smith wires from Coen Mr Watson reports Blacks spearing cattle on Station & Tadpole Creeks. Smith leaving today to patrol there and visit blacks camps, strongly recommend a monthly allowance be made to Coen & Mein blacks same as Musgrave & other blacks which would I think prevent cattle spearing same as such allowances have done in other places.<sup>556</sup>

On 12 April 1897, Tozer, Home Secretary approved £5 per month for rations to be distributed at Coen and Mein to the Aboriginals. Tozer further approved the supply of rations to the Moreton blacks on 8 June 1897 in the sum of £10 per month.<sup>557</sup>

## G — BURKE SUB-DISTRICT.

Georgetown, June 28. A half-caste girl (Minnie), aged eight, was speared in the river by a blackfellow (Tommy), who was aiming at another. The spear passed through the intestines and the child died in hospital. On the night of 25 June 1897, a blackfellow, named Brumby, who was interested in the girl who was speared, attacked an old gin, who was the mother of the perpetrator of the previous spearing affair, and threw a spear at her from a distance of twenty yards. The spear passed through her body causing instant death. The body was buried by the blacks but on 26 June, it was exhumed by the police when Dr Hawthorne made a postmortem examination. Brumby was

<sup>552</sup> Telegraph 6 January 1896 p 5.

<sup>553</sup> Brisbane Courier 30 April 1896 p 5. QPG 1896 p 176.

<sup>554</sup> Brisbane Courier 8 March 1898 p 5. QPG 1897 p 435 & 1898 p 196.

<sup>555</sup> Brisbane Courier 8 April 1897 p 4.

<sup>556</sup> QSA ITM17980 DR58319, p 77.

<sup>557</sup> QSA ITM17980 DR58319, p 119.

in the lockup on a charge of murder but Tommy, who speared the girl, was at large, although the police were scouring the country for him.<sup>558</sup> Normanton, September 28, 1897. The Supreme Court, before Mr Justice Power, Brumby, an Aboriginal, was convicted of manslaughter of a gin (Maggie) at Georgetown and was sentenced to three months' imprisonment.<sup>559</sup>

Murder, Georgetown. Tommy (an Aboriginal) was charged, on a warrant issued by the Georgetown Bench, with having at Georgetown, on 25 June 1897, murdered one Minnie (an Aboriginal half-caste). Tommy's description: 30 years of age, 5 feet 9 inches high, medium build, known to local police; supposed to have gone to the Newcastle Range near Georgetown.<sup>560</sup> Georgetown, July 28, 1900. A sensational capture of an Aboriginal murderer was made on the Etheridge River by Sergeant Old and Constable Meldon. On 26 June 1897, a quarrel took place amongst the blacks, when Tommy, the prisoner, threw a spear at another boy named Brumby, and the spear struck a half-caste girl named Minnie from which the girl died. Brumby on meeting the mother of Tommy, speared her to death. Brumby was arrested without trouble, and was tried at Normanton, but got off with six (sic, three) months imprisonment. A warrant was issued for Tommy at the time, and though the police for three years had been endeavouring to arrest him they failed, although on several occasions they got within close quarters of him. However, the police got word that he was about the river, and after a very clever and unexpected advance located their man in a gunyah. He tried to get away but Sergeant Old got hold of him and after an exciting fifteen minutes' tussle, assisted by Meldon and tracker, Jack, handcuffed him, but not before the desperado had bitten each constable in various places. The other blacks showed a threatening attitude and a rifle had to be discharged over their heads before they could be persuaded to relinquish their bellicose attitude. Great praise was due to the constables for their plucky capture of Tommy, a notorious scoundrel who would stop at nothing to resist capture. He was brought before the court and remanded for eight days.<sup>561</sup> Tommy was sentenced to death by his Honour Acting Judge McNaughton at Normanton on 21 September 1900, for the murder of a half-caste girl named Minnie.<sup>562</sup> On 31 October 1900, the Executive Council decided that Tommy should be reprieved and serve seven years' penal servitude.<sup>563</sup>

Three extra trackers were to be stationed at the Turn-Off Lagoon. This action was taken owing to the depredations by the blacks. At Wollogorang station on 11 November, Mr Robt. Shadforth was speared in the side by the natives who had attacked the station at daybreak. With the assistance of Mr G A Matthies, the blacks were beaten off and a party tracked them for 26 miles when they had to abandon the chase owing to the rough, stony ranges and the unshod horses being footsore.

Mr C E Tonner, writing to the *Burke Telegraph*, stated:

This was a most determined and cunningly planned effort of the myalls to wipe out the place, and it is a marvel to me that they are not now in possession of the station. After they were beaten off, the myall gins explained the plan of attack to the station gins as follows: 'Gin first time mak'em noise, wake up white fellow. White fellow come out; altogether blackfellow spear him.' No doubt, unless they get a severe lesson for this, the same may occur at any time. Mr Shadforth was progressing favourably.<sup>564</sup>

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<sup>558</sup> Telegraph 29 June 1897 p 5. Brisbane Courier 29 June 1897 p 5.

<sup>559</sup> Qld PG Vol. XXXIV] 23 October 1897 [No. 49 p 374.

<sup>560</sup> Qld PG Vol. XXXIV] 24 July 1897 [No. 31 p 258.

<sup>561</sup> Brisbane Courier 1 August 1900 p 6. Qld PG Vol. XXXVII] 25 August 1900 [No. 56 p 418.

<sup>562</sup> Qld PG Vol. XXXVII] 20 October 1900 [No. 67 p 499.

<sup>563</sup> Week 2 November 1900 p 3.

<sup>564</sup> North Queensland Register 17 November 1897 p 13.

## G — CLONCURRY SUB-DISTRICT.

Cloncurry *Advocate*, April 23. Quite a gloom was cast over the town on Friday night last when Mr Hope Kennedy arrived with the news that the body of Mr Jack Cole, a respected resident of this district for a number of years, had been found murdered at Spring Creek watershed, about five miles off the Urandangi-Cloncurry Road and about 27 miles from Devoncourt, on the 15th instant. Sergeant Green at once left for the scene of murder and an enquiry was held before Mr Alex. Kennedy, JP. From the evidence Cole had gone in search of a gin belonging to a blackboy in the employ of his mate, Walker, who had absconded with an Aboriginal named Jack. From the position of the body, a blackfellow rushed at him from behind and drove a spear into his back which penetrated the heart. The wound was about an eighth of an inch in circumference and was quite visible on the body. On examining the deceased's shirt, the corresponding hole in the deceased's body was found with small pieces of spear attached. It was stated in evidence that a struggle must have taken place between the unfortunate man and the black demon. The horse appeared to have gone round in a circle held by the bridle by a barefooted man. The tracks of the horse were traced to the gully where it was found. After the struggle, the barefooted person ran in the opposite direction to where the body was found. The point of a lance-wood spear about six inches long and covered with blood was found close to the murdered man's head. A kangaroo net, used by Aboriginals in hunting, was also found; at a distance of about 28 yards, two boomerangs and two pieces of broken spear were found.

From the statement of Mr Neil Anderson, he saw the deceased on Thursday, the 15th instant when he told him that he was looking for a gin who had been taken from his camp by a blackboy named Jack. Anderson camped at a soakage on the night of the 15th, and at about 12 o'clock the horse that the deceased was riding came into water with saddle and bridle on, the reins hanging over the kneepad of the saddle. He tied the horse up and the deceased not turning up, Anderson followed the tracks and found the dead body of Cole which was covered with a bough. He then rode to Devoncourt and reported the matter to Mr Kennedy, who immediately sent word to the Cloncurry police. Cole was about 37 years of age, a native of Yass, N.S.W., and was much esteemed by all who knew him; his cheery laugh and disposition will be sadly missed from many a campfire for Jack Cole was a man in every sense. Jack was arrested at Bridgewater after being wounded in his endeavour to escape.<sup>565</sup> The offender, Jack, was tried at the Circuit Court, Normanton, on 23 September 1897 for the murder of John Cole (a white man) but was acquitted.<sup>566</sup>

# 1898

## F DISTRICT — COOK SUB-DISTRICT.

On 27 May 1898, Sub-Inspector Garraway received a telegram from Inspector Marrett that Mr Ahlers of Maytown had complained of blacks killing cattle in numbers on Sandy Creek and Cradle Point and he was to patrol and enquire into the matter. Garraway received a further wire on 15 June 1898 from Sgt Farquharson that Maytown police reported blacks troublesome at Douglas's slaughter yard, demanding beef from the yardman; please investigate. Garraway reported to Inspector Marrett, Cooktown on 18 June 1898 as follows:

<sup>565</sup> Northern Miner 29 April 1897 p 3.

<sup>566</sup> QPG 1898 p 192.

There is no truth in the report of blacks killing cattle in numbers on Sandy Creek and Cradle Point. In one old camp, hoofs belonging to a calf were found. This was the foundation of the attached telegram; the imagination of Mr Ahlers supplied the rest. Re telegram of 15 June 1898. A large mob of blacks were camped near Douglas's slaughtering yard, disturbing the cattle in the yard, and a few blacks did come up and endeavour to obtain meat from the Chinese slaughtermen by intimidation. When Mr Douglas appeared, they ran away. I have made the blacks shift their camp further away from town.<sup>567</sup>

## F — CAIRNS SUB-DISTRICT.

Sub-Inspector McNamara (said the *Townsville Bulletin* of March 15) received a telegram from Cardwell stating that a blackboy named Pat, in the employ of Mr Gardiner of the Telegraph Department, was murdered by blacks. The body was found by Constable Holmes in a hollow log about 3 miles from Cardwell. The boy was enticed a short distance out of the town and then strangled. There was also a large piece of flesh cut out of his right thigh. Three arrests were made.<sup>568</sup>

## G — BURKE SUB-DISTRICT.

Turn-Off Lagoon. On 9 October the remains of four head of cattle were found on Settlement Creek, the property of C E Towner, Westmoreland Station. Suspicion of the illegal killing attached to an Aboriginal, Jimmy, who was wanted by the Burketown police on a charge of murder, with several other Aboriginals whose names were unknown. Tommy was believed to have gone to the Northern Territory.<sup>569</sup>

## G — CLONCURRY SUB-DISTRICT.

Cloncurry. Jack and Billy were charged on warrants issued by the Cloncurry Bench with having, about 12 January last, murdered one Johnnie (an Aboriginal) at Cabbagetree Creek, in the Police District of Cloncurry. Descriptions: 1st. 28 years of age, 6 feet high, medium build, black whiskers and moustache, 112 stone weight, smart active appearance. 2nd. 29 years of age, 6 feet high, stout build, 122 stone weight, black whiskers and moustache; both Aboriginals. Supposed to be in the Leichhardt Ranges. Offender Jack was tried at the Circuit Court, Normanton, on 23 September 1897 for the murder of John Cole (a white man) but was acquitted.<sup>570</sup>

# 1899

## F DISTRICT — COOK SUB-DISTRICT.

From the *Cooktown Independent*:

At the Police Court on November 24, before Messrs W J Carless and F J Cherry, Tommy, an Aboriginal of the tribe at Rocky<sup>571</sup> concerned in the attempted murder of Ah Sue and subsequent

<sup>567</sup> QSA ITM17981 DR81522 Pt 1, 99/11352, pp 48-63.

<sup>568</sup> Week 1 April 1898 p 13.

<sup>569</sup> QPG 1898 p 474.

<sup>570</sup> QPG 1898 p 192.

<sup>571</sup> Rocky River, Cape York Peninsula, near Coen.

robbery of his hut, was charged with larceny of a hat, etc., property of Ah Sue. The articles were found in his possession, but as the Chinaman could not identify the accused as one of the blacks who attacked him, the charge was amended to one of illegal possession to which the accused pleaded guilty. He was sentenced to 4 months in the Cooktown gaol. Paddy is said to be the blackfellow who speared Ah Sue and is still at large. The blacks in Coen are getting cheekier than ever. One of them speared a blackboy who was out looking for horses when only a few miles from the township.<sup>572</sup>

Cooktown, December 20. Poulsen went to Rocky Island lightship with rations, his boat being manned by Aboriginals. On the return trip, the blackfellows attacked Poulsen and threw him into the sea, drowning him.<sup>573</sup> Constable Kenny and two troopers were taken by the pilot cutter from Cooktown to search for the murderers of Poulsen.<sup>574</sup> Cooktown, January 9. The police returned from the north, bringing two male blacks and two gins suspected of murdering Peter Poulsen. At the Police Court, Sundown, an Aboriginal, was remanded for eight days on a charge of murder. The charges against the three others were withdrawn. To the arresting constable, Sundown said, "Me put him in water and keep him there because he row with me."<sup>575</sup> Cooktown, January 16. Sundown, an Aboriginal, was committed for trial for the murder of Peter Poulsen, on the Chester River in November last.<sup>576</sup> Cooktown, April 26. The Northern Circuit Court, 21 April 1899 by his honour, Sir Samuel Griffith, the Chief Justice, there were five cases before the court, the accused in each case being Aboriginals. Tommy Dighton charged with attempted rape was found guilty and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. Sundown charged with the murder of Peter Poulsen was found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to three years' imprisonment. Dicky charged with wounding with intent to murder Ah Sue, at the Rocky goldfield, was found guilty of wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm and sentenced to two years' imprisonment with hard labour in Stewart Creek gaol. Charley charged with the murder of Monkey at Lakefield station was found guilty and sentenced to death.<sup>577</sup>



*'I raised my carbine, and fired.'*

Illustrated Sydney News 3 January 1889, p 21

<sup>572</sup> North Queensland Register 24 December 1898 p 18. North Queensland Register 19 October 1898 p 9.

<sup>573</sup> Northern Miner 20 December 1898 p 2. Mackay Mercury 22 December 1898 p 3.

<sup>574</sup> QSA Item ID17981 DR81522, 99/11344 p 20.

<sup>575</sup> Northern Miner 10 January 1899 p 2.

<sup>576</sup> Gympie Times and Mary River Mining Gazette 17 January 1899 p 2.

<sup>577</sup> Telegraph 26 April 1899 p 4. Qld PG Vol. XXXVI] 13 May 1899 [No. 31, p 233.

## Chapter 4 — Nineteen Hundreds

# 1900

### **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NORTHERN PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINALS FOR 1900.**

On 1 January 1901, Dr Roth the Northern Protector presented his 1900 report for the six months to 31 December 1900.

As mentioned in my last Annual Report, where the presence of any particular Aboriginal has proved a source of possible danger to the white population, &c., his removal to and detention in another district has been, upon my recommendation, sanctioned by the Minister under section 9 of the Act. The following deportations have been thus authorised during the past twelve months:

Andy, Endeavour River, for the murder of Breeza at Hidden Valley.

Shell-fish, Batavia River, murder of a gin.

Missie, Starcke River, believed to be the murderer of the civilised Aboriginal, Fred Fooks, last October. Has a great deal of influence over his tribe and quite capable of using it against white men as well as natives. Daring and treacherous disposition.

Ponto, Endeavour River, convicted of assault on a white girl.

Tommy Roderick, Normanby River continued larcenies at miners' camps. Wilfully setting fire to a neighbouring station.

Long George, Mount Amos, &c., larcenies at the miners' camps.

Billy Nolan, Normanby River, larceny. A notoriously bad character.

Bendigo, Mitchell River, caught spearing cattle.

Larry, Endeavour River, three convictions for larceny. Being so young—only thirteen—he was sent to the Yarrabah Reformatory.

No murder of Europeans has been reported during the past six months. Two prospectors were attacked on the Coleman River last October, and one of them was speared but without fatal results. There were certain facts connected with the incident which were never made public. Hundreds of miners passed over the same track from Normanton and Croydon, and the blacks never interfered with them.

### **F DISTRICT — COOK SUB-DISTRICT.**

Sergeant Whiteford and two troopers left on Thursday for the Coleman and Mitchell rivers to investigate the circumstances of the spearing of J Chisholm by the blacks of the Coleman. Chisholm was a patient in the Cooktown Hospital.<sup>578</sup>

Cooktown, November 26. Some four or five months ago, it was reported that a man named P Culhane was missing from Ebagoolah. He left, alone, on a prospecting trip in the direction of the Coleman and not returning within a reasonable time, the police searched without success. It was thought possible he had made for some other district and the matter was, to a great extent, forgotten. A few weeks ago, a party on the Coleman River came upon the remains of a man and also discovered a saddle and rifle which were at once identified as having belonged to Culhane.

<sup>578</sup> North Queensland Register 3 December 1900 p 33.

From the very scattered disposition of the remains, it was believed the unfortunate man was killed by the blacks and eaten. No clothing was found just the principal bones which were scattered here and there. There were signs that his horse was tied to a tree for a couple of days and probably taken away by the blacks as no bridle was discovered. Whether the unfortunate man discovered gold or not is not known but he intended to camp, as bark had been cut, and marks showed that it had been stripped by the blacks. The inference was that Culhane had employed the blacks, satisfied they could be trusted, and after being lulled into a false sense of security was treacherously murdered. A much larger police force should be maintained in this district, and it was hoped the authorities will take action without unnecessary delay. Culhane was well-known on the Palmer and latterly lived in the Herberton district where he was butchering and dairying.<sup>579</sup>

## D — LONGREACH SUB-DISTRICT.

On 4 October 1900, at the Blackall Police Court, before the police magistrate three aborigines named Langlo Charlie, Mount Morris Charlie, and Jenny Williams were charged with the murder of another aborigine named Peter at Listowel Downs on 28 August 1900. Sergeant Carroll conducted the prosecution. The accused were undefended. Constables Bates and Dunlea gave evidence that Langlo Charlie admitted killing Peter by hitting him on the head with a nulla nulla, Mount Morris Charlie hit Peter on the head with a tomahawk, and Jenny Williams struck Peter twice with a yam-stick. The constables disinterred Peter's body, and brought the skull into Blackall, and handed it to Dr H J Hewer. In answer to Sergeant Carroll, Constable Bates said that Langlo Charlie and Mount Morris Charlie told him that Peter had killed a brother of Jenny Williams's and a cousin of Mount Morris Charlie and they said, "That is why we killed Peter." On Tuesday the case was resumed, and two aborigines named Langlo Jimmy and Opal Charlie were called as witnesses. As they did not know the nature of an oath, the Bench declined to admit their evidence. Mowrie, another aborigine, who said that if he did not tell the truth, he would be sent to gaol and declared that he would tell the truth, testified that he saw Peter go to Mount Morris Charlie's camp and sit down. Langlo Charlie came up at the back of Peter with a nulla nulla in his hand but Peter did not see him; Langlo Charlie hit Peter on the back of the head with a nulla nulla and Peter fell on his face; Mount Morris Charlie then hit Peter once on the head with a tomahawk. Jenny Williams then hit Peter twice with a yam-stick, once on the hip and once on the thigh. Blood came from Peter's head. Peter died very quick and an old blackfellow covered him up. Langlo Charlie and Mount Morris Charlie made a hole and with Oakwood Charlie, Langlo Jimmy, and witness put the body in the hole and covered it up. The witness saw two constables afterwards take the body from the hole. Cross-examined by Mount Morris Charlie, the witness said: You came over to kill Peter because Peter killed Billy Lowe and Jennie. Peter also killed a gin and half-killed another gin. The defendants were committed for trial to the Supreme Court, Rockhampton, 27 November 1900.<sup>580</sup>

27 November 1900, the Supreme Court, Rockhampton, before Mr Justice Noel Langlo Charlie, Mount Morris Charlie, and Jennie Williams, three Aborigines, were charged with having murdered an Aborigine named Peter at Listowel Downs. Jack an aborigine was called to act as interpreter. His Honour asked him if he was only carrying out a conversation with Mount Morris Charlie? Jack: Yes.

His Honour said it was quite clear to him that the evidence was not being interpreted properly to Langlo Charlie, and he did not see how the case could be proceeded with. His Honour then asked the jurors the question and received the reply that they were of the opinion that the prisoners did not understand the nature of the charges made against them.

<sup>579</sup> North Queensland Register 3 December 1900 p 22.

<sup>580</sup> Morning Bulletin 9 October 1900 p 7. Qld PG Vol. XXXVII] 10 November 1900 [No. 73 p 527.

Mr Kingsbury said in that case he would enter a nolle prosequi against all the prisoners. His Honour said he would discharge the prisoners but would make no order as to their future treatment. That was a matter for the Crown Law Office.<sup>581</sup>

# 1901

## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NORTHERN PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINALS FOR 1901 — ABORIGINAL CRIME.

Seven incorrigibles whose presence in their respective districts were possible sources of danger to the white population etc., have, upon my recommendation, been deported to Fraser Island on the authority of the Minister under section 9 of the Act. The transfer of such individuals has been attended with good results: they are far away from all their old associations, they are able to make a new start in life, and they mostly, as I am informed, develop into law-abiding and useful members of the community. In my opinion, this is the most merciful method of dealing with them, and the following particulars concerning each case sent here during the past year may prove of interest:

Chiribin, from Cardwell. Two convictions for larceny: very troublesome since his return to the district, after undergoing his first sentence, in leading and encouraging the other blacks to assist him. “Told some of the residents that he liked the gaol, and would like to go back there again.”

Jacky, from Herberton. Arrested for murdering another Aboriginal named Peter, but not sufficient medico-legal evidence to bring him before the court; accused by the local blacks of four previous murders. “Not the least doubt that he will be killed and eaten if discharged in the district.”

Bendigo, from Dunbar (Mitchell River). Caught killing cattle by the police. “This boy 18 really a bad character.”

Tommy Tomahawk, from Cairns. Brutally murdered an Aboriginal female, Maggie, about eighteen months ago. “He at once left the district, but has returned, and now lives among the Aboriginals generally camped near Redlynche. The women in the camps hold him in great dread, and he has been known to use threats towards them. He should be removed from the district: having escaped punishment for his crime, the effect upon other men of a like stamp is far from good.”

Charlie Warbash, from Thornborough. Convicted for larceny. “A continued source of trouble and annoyance in the district.”

Norman, from Herberton. Convicted of “very serious assault in two instances.”

Ned, from Irvinebank. Ex-tracker. Had already served two sentences three and six months, respectively, for stealing and being illegally on premises.

The two Aboriginals Tommy Roderick (ex-tracker) and Long George, from Cooktown, whose deportation had been sanctioned last year, broke out of the local lock-up and escaped; they have however, since been recaptured and are now at Fraser Island.

The Minister has approved of the deportation (not yet effected) of two ex-trackers, Waimara and James, of Red Island (Cape York), who, during the last few months, when the pearl fleet was in the vicinity, were instrumental in procuring a number of women (over twenty of them) from the interior—about McDonnell—for purposes of prostitution. They also traffic with the young blacks—procure Aboriginal labour for both European and alien employers, getting commissions in the shape of trade, etc.: I cannot say that they get grog. Waimara is reputed to be a man who has committed more than one murder: he is very smart and intelligent, and in his present

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<sup>581</sup> Morning Bulletin 28 November 1900 p 7.

surroundings all the more dangerous. Both these men are exerting very evil influence over the Red Island natives, by whom they are recognised as bosses.

Certain Aboriginals discharged from gaol on expiry of their sentences were returned to their native homes at the expense of this Department Scullmate of Mabuiag Island, Torres Strait, after five years at St. Helena, for manslaughter; Jacky, of the Coen, after six months at Stewart's Creek; and four Batavia River boys after a similar sentence at the same prison for larceny of a boat.

Paddy, for the murder of his gin Rosie at Camooweal (Normanton Supreme Court, September) was remanded to the next Circuit Court; while a conviction was recorded against Bulloo for the manslaughter of Chang-Look, a Chinaman, at Shepherd's Creek, Laura (Cooktown Circuit Court, May), with three years in Stewart's Creek gaol. In the latter case there was a question of the accused's gin Lucy: she admitted, "I been sleep along Chang Look one night, two days before."

Three blacks, Little Peter, Long Jacky, and Gilbert, for the alleged murder of another Aboriginal Peter, were remanded to the Cooktown Circuit Court next April, with a view to securing the services of a European interprets. Reports have come to hand relative to the alleged murder of a male native Cooper at Kuranda, and of a gin Biddy by her husband Boko, at Behana Creek, Nelson.

Convictions for crimes of a less serious character have been brought under my notice in the cases of Dick, a police tracker, for assisting prisoners to escape at the Coen, two years in Stewart's Creek Prison; Echo, for occasioning grievous bodily harm to another black, Billy Hughes, at Georgetown, four months in Normanton gaol; Chilie Baloo, for larceny at Georgetown, one month at Normanton gaol; and Charlie, for illegally using a horse at Ebagoolah, fourteen days' imprisonment. At Cairns, at the December District Court, nine Aboriginals were charged with stealing a lugger containing stores and firearms from Dunk Island: they had been imprisoned on remand during the last six months, and were now sentenced to one month's hard labour for stealing the rations in the boat.

# 1902

## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NORTHERN PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINALS FOR 1902—ABORIGINAL CRIME.

In terms of Section 3 of the 1901 Act, instructions for the removal of the following incorrigibles to districts (Fraser Island, Durundur, Mapoon) far removed from their native haunts, have been given by the Minister upon my recommendation:

Missie, of the Starcke River. First reported on by Constable Kenny to his sub-inspector on 20-7-00. Daring and treacherous disposition; believed to be the murderer of the civilised Aboriginal Fred Fooks, on the Starcke last October. A great deal of influence over his tribe, and quite capable of using it against white men as well as Aboriginals." The Minister gave the order for his removal to Fraser Island on 4-1-01. Missie however managed to elude capture by Kenny until the beginning of last March.

Charlie Bushman, of Barrow Point. Two or three murders of others than members of his own tribe—as well as threats to Europeans—are recorded against him. [His removal has not yet been effected.]

Paddy, a myall belonging to Camooweal country. Charged with having murdered his gin, Rosie; one white witness to the fact. Was charged before the Normanton Supreme Court last September, (1901); remanded to the next court (March) and a nolle prosequi entered. "His own tribe fear him, and the white people consider him dangerous."

Darkie was arrested at Cairns for escaping from Fraser Island. It would appear that he had served nine years at St. Helena for murdering a European (Hobson) in the neighbourhood of Cairns, but was released during Jubilee conditionally on his remaining at Fraser Island. His return to his native country was fraught with great danger.

Jimmie Donga, Toby, Jerry, Tommy Neil (ex-tracker, and leader of the gang), Paddy and Jack, all from Atherton. The first three have already been caught. The trouble with them is that they have been continually breaking into, and stealing from the settlers' huts, and then hiding away in the scrub. The three captured have declared their intention of not doing any work, but of continuing to steal what they can. All have been in the habit of camping by themselves away from the other blacks, so it may prove some little time before the other three are arrested. To prevent any subsequent trouble or collusion, it has been arranged that two are to be deported to Fraser Island, two to Durundur, and two to Deebing Creek.

Sandy (Aboriginal name Wauibo), for the alleged *Lolly fish* murder in the neighbourhood of the Pascoe River last August. He was originally brought up before the Coen Bench, but there being only the evidence of two Aboriginals—even if they were to be found—the warrant was cancelled.

Charlie, for spearing the Aboriginal Charlie Ross on the Cooktown Railway Line in June.

Andy of the Endeavour River, whose deportation was authorised in January, 1901, has finally been captured and sent down. It was he who was responsible for the murder of Aboriginal Breeza at Hidden Valley.

Pumpkin and Jimmy, two young men from the neighbourhood of Moreton E.T.O.

Warrants were out against them for attempted murder—the throwing overboard of a Japanese from a bêche-de-mer boat (the *Hiroshima*); but there was not sufficiently reliable evidence forthcoming for a conviction.

Joe has been similarly sent away from the same district. It was he who last year, in company with Handsome Harry (still at large), treacherously speared a Cooktown boy, Tommy, employed by the Moreton E.T.O. officials.

Harry, an incorrigible who had already served two sentences for larceny, was deported on the application of the Herberton justices.

Cook (ex-tracker), charged at the Coen with breaking, entering, and stealing, and was reported to have skeleton keys in his possession.

Dough-boy, for the murder of gin Binger, at Bailey's Creek. (Mossman Police District).

Pinoe, against whom the Crown Prosecutor entered a nolle prosequi for attempting to carnally know a white girl under ten years, has been deported to Mapoon, and the Superintendent fully warned as to the boy's character.

George, sentenced at Townsville on 2 June to nine months for being on premises for an unlawful purpose, and for being in possession of stolen property for which he could not give a satisfactory account. He is an old offender, and it was only two or three days after serving a six months' sentence that he was rearrested on the present charge. He will be sent to Fraser Island or Durundur when he comes out of gaol.

With regard to ex-trackers Waianiara and James, of Red Island, whose deportation had been authorised over a twelve months ago. Protector Bennett has expressed the opinion that such a length of time having now elapsed, he does not consider it advisable to take any further action at present: if, however, these two boys give any more trouble, he will report the matter, and ask that the Minister's order be given effect to.

A few serious cases have been dealt with in the courts, &c.: Tommy Townsville (ex-tracker), for attempted murder of a Chinaman at Charleston in May last, received a sentence of five years at the last Normanton Circuit Court. Joe and Billy, at the same court, were sentenced to death for the murder of Long Barney at Televera Creek, Percyville, in April last: the death penalty was commuted. Willie, an Aboriginal, charged with murder at Ingham last March, was sentenced to death but the extreme penalty commuted. At Liverpool Creek (Geraldton) one Ningie is alleged

to have been murdered by Aboriginals Papa (deaf and dumb) and Mick, for whom warrants have been issued.

Boat-stealing (in the bêche-de-mer trade), with perhaps attempted murder of the masters, occurred on two different occasions at the beginning of the year. On 23 February two Japanese were thrown overboard from the lugger *Hiroshima*, but they managed to swim to the Piper Island Lightship. It was two of the offending crew (Pumpkin and Jimmy) whom, much against my wishes, I felt myself morally bound to entrap at the Moreton for deportation to Fraser Island. On 13th March, while the ketch *Spede* was getting under way near York Island, the Aboriginal crew, six in number, threw overboard the Japanese master, Tomita, and a Japanese passenger, Wakamatsu. Both men reached the island, notwithstanding that one was struck while in the waler by the blacks, but not seriously injured. There is no doubt that boat-stealing by the Aboriginal crews has become comparatively frequent during the past year and requires checking. It was, consequently, very satisfactory to learn that at Thursday Island, on 4 July, for stealing one of Cowling's cutters, of the six blacks arrested (Charlie, Bosun, William, George, Pilot, and Aaron) one got three months, while the remaining five received two months each. So again, on the 7th of the same month one Jimmy Eginga got three months for stealing Embley's dinghy. At Cooktown, on 11 February, an Aboriginal, Ned, alias Norman, was arrested for having in his possession a cutter, of which he could not give a satisfactory account. Inquiry elicited the fact that the vessel was stolen from Darnley Island, but as the owner (F. E. Morey) declined to prosecute, the offender was discharged. I have reason to believe that in the immediate future there will be a diminution in the frequency of this particular offence. On more than one occasion, in the Peninsula, boys, for whose arrest warrants on this charge had been issued, have told me that the reason for their clearing out with the boat was that they had signed on at the local (Thursday Island) Shipping Office with an individual for whom they were quite willing to work, but had subsequently found themselves put on to a boat with a master whom they perhaps had never before seen, and whom they didn't care about: the result was that they took the first opportunity of getting home again. While not for one moment approving of the methods adopted by these natives for gaining their ends, I understand their raising such objections, for until the Aboriginals 1901 Act received the Royal Assent last May, and remedied the cause of complaint, the master or owner of the boat could sign the boys on at the Shipping Office (under Sections 3 and 4 of *The Native Labourers Protection Act of 1884*): the power is now confined, and rightly so (Section 10, subsection (1) of the Aboriginals, &c., 1901 Act), to the master of the vessel whom the boy himself sees and can please himself whether he cares to join him or not. On the other hand, I am equally convinced that the treatment meted out by the coloured aliens in charge of these boats has a very great deal to do with the insubordination of the crews. Protector Bennett's views re ship-desertions [see Employment of Aboriginals on Boats] are well worthy of attention.

Amongst other crimes against property, the following particulars concerning convictions have been forwarded me: Peter for stealing rations at Barrow Point was sentenced at Cooktown (18-1-02) to six months' hard labour: Charley, at Croydon (10-4-02), and another at Mackay (19-5-02), received six months and three months respectively for stealing: Tommy, of Burketown (28-4-02), a similar punishment for wilful destruction of property: Tommy, of Atherton, three months (9-7-02) for breaking and entering: Tommy of Mackay (8-12-02), one month for stealing. A half-caste woman (West Indian father and Aboriginal mother), Maria Jeffery, nineteen years of age, was sentenced at Winton (25-2-02) to six months' imprisonment for stealing, but was released under Section 656 of Criminal Code.

Complaints every now and again come to hand concerning blacks stealing rations, &c., from miners', prospectors', and travellers' tents: if these people would only insist on keeping the natives

always at a distance, and avoiding all social intercourse, I feel confident that much less would be heard of such alleged offences.

At Cloncurry (5-1-02) Joe was cautioned and discharged for "being in a dwelling-house for an unlawful purpose." In October Sub-Inspector Garraway forwarded a report to the effect that the blacks had set fire to Strathleven Station on both sides of the river (Palmer), and that Meta Downs, on Fish Creek (a southern tributary of the Palmer), had also been burnt out. [These fires were in all probability lighted for hunting purposes, for driving the game out. W.E.R.] For drunkenness: Jimmy Combo, George, Tommy Dodd, and Charlie were discharged at Thornborough (27-5-02), Cooktown (28-8-02), and Normanton (11-12-02, 14-9-02) respectively, while Polly was fined 5s., or 24 hours, at Croydon (20-9-02). None of the individuals supplying liquor to these Aboriginals were apprehended.

At the Coen, Monkey received fourteen days for a common assault (24-12-02), while Tiger served a term of three weeks' imprisonment at Cooktown (9-2-02) for disorderly conduct and assault. Echo, for disorderly conduct at Georgetown (11-11-02), was fined £1, or 48 hours. Nipper received seven days in the Cloncurry Lock-up (18-8-02) for obscene language.

Four deserters from the *Thistle* (B. McMaster in charge), at Bathurst Head, were ordered back to their vessel by the Cooktown Bench. For absconding from his hired service at Barclay Downs, Digero was discharged and his agreement cancelled at Camooweal (15-2-02), while the Thornborough Bench (8-5-02) cancelled that of Jimmy Burley, whose employer wanted to remove him against his wishes to another district. The Department paid the return fare home (Townsville to Cairns) of the discharged prisoner Spider, of Herberton, who was afraid to travel overland for fear of being killed by tribesmen of a district strange to him.

Protector Galbraith is "glad to report that no complaints have been made (nor in any way brought under my notice) of offences against the person or stock by Aboriginals. This is a silent and undeniable testimony of the efficacy of the Act, when it is remembered that there are several thousand uncivilised blacks in the Gulf districts. About 150 Aboriginals are employed at daily work in Normanton, and in a less degree at Burketown, Croydon, Georgetown, Camooweal, and Cloncurry, yet there have never been any charges of theft against them. On the other hand, numerous instances have been cited to me by employers of money being found in clothes, &c., and returned." In the Winton district the general conduct of the Aboriginals during the year has been good, only three convictions having been recorded—two for petty larceny and one for unlawfully using a horse. None of these offenders were natives of the district. (Protector Brosnan.)

# 1903

## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NORTHERN PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINALS FOR 1903— ABORIGINAL CRIME.

In terms of section 3 of the 1901 Act, instructions for the removal of the following incorrigibles to districts (Fraser Island, Durundur, Mapoon), far removed from their native haunts, have been given by the Minister:

Antoni, Tiger, Billy, Paddy, Jacky, and Peter. Antoni (his second sentence for a similar offence), and Tiger, are already serving sentences of six months for housebreaking.

The policy reported that these boys had banded themselves into a gang under the leadership of Antoni, and that their removal from the district was very desirable.

Tommy, for the murder (by stabbing), of Aboriginal Albert, at Mareeba, on 9 March. A drunkard and an opium smoker. All the Aboriginals- in the district are afraid of him. He camps by himself, but when he gets drink he goes into camp, where he nearly always causes trouble. Both he and deceased have given more trouble to the police than all the Aboriginals in the district. The legal evidence against him on the capital charge was too slight to secure a conviction.

Papa (partly deaf and dumb). For the murder of Ningi, at Liverpool Creek (Geraldton), on 7 July 1902. The murder was committed in conjunction with Mick, still at large, and witnessed by a female half-caste, Annie (whose removal to Yarrabah has since been effected). There were some peculiar circumstances connected with the case in that the tomahawk which was used for the purpose was alleged by the blacks to have been borrowed for the purpose by a white settler. Owing to the prisoner being partly deaf and dumb, it would be impossible to explain the nature of the charge to him. He subsequently appears to have escaped from Fraser Island, whither he was deported.

Harry, on the complaint of the Pentland (Deep Lead) miners to Mr Geo. Jackson, MLA, that wagonette at Cape River Siding.

Toby on the complaint of the manager of Lawn Hills. The police reported that Toby has been the cause of many fights between different blacks, and the organiser of all depredations committed by the tribe of which he is king. Before the Minister's warrant for his removal to Mapoon was received, he was convicted at Burketown (7-7-3), with a six months' sentence, of having meat illegally in his possession.

Mallin on the requisition of the Herberton justices, was sentenced to two months' imprisonment in Cairns' gaol for assaulting a white woman.

Hero an incorrigible horse-thief from Maytown. In connection with this case Protector King reports that this practice of deporting such characters has a far more deterrent effect on the blacks than sending them to gaol. He has since made his escape from Fraser Island.

Friday, continually thieving from the camps of the Cape River fossickers, by whom he is even more dreaded than his mate Harry [see above]; he obstructed the police with a tomahawk, when they were arresting the latter.

Marabo at present serving six months' imprisonment with hard labour at Stewart's Creek; sentenced at Geraldton (1-7-3) for assaulting a young white woman. About twenty-two years of age, and has been a noted thief in the district for the past two years. "After the expiration of his sentence, it would be of the utmost service to the district to have him deported, as if he is allowed to return, he will be looked upon as a hero among the other Aboriginals, and perhaps continue in his depredations."

Toby and Jack. On the application of the local Protector at Cairns. Two incorrigible thieves, of Atherton, now in the Herberton cells. Toby escaped from Herberton gaol in March last year.

Application was made for the deportation of George, of Butcher's Hill, for thieving from the miners' camps, but I did not consider the evidence strong enough to warrant my recommending it to the returned to his old haunts in the Peninsula. This is the same boy who, with Jimmy and Pumpkin, was deported South on the Minister's orders, and taken away by the police during September last year, on the conclusion of the inquiry into the murder of four Aboriginals by police trackers. It would appear that he escaped from Fraser Island in the early part of February, 1903, and, although the police were notified next day, he seems to have eluded their vigilance, making the overland journey of at least 800 miles in under six months. Considering that he is a myall, and hardly able to speak a word of English, that he has had to pass through tribe after tribe, and country all foreign to him, and that he was originally taken down by steamer from Thursday Island, the performance is a remarkable one.

Tommy Deighton has written again from St. Helena. I have promised to pay him a visit shortly.

I have reported adversely on Darkie's application on expiry of his sentence to be allowed to return to Cairns. He originally murdered a European, escaped from Fraser Island last year, wandered back to his native country, was caught again and sent to Durundur, where he was convicted of an assault on the superintendent, the penalty for which he subsequently paid. He was finally sent to Deebing Creek.

For the alleged murder of Aboriginal Charlie on the Murray River (Cardwell), Mango, Fred, and Daisy were committed.

For attempted rape, Billy, Johnny and Paddy, aged 17, 19, and 21 years respectively, were committed for trial at the Normanton Circuit Court (9-10-3) and sentenced to five years' imprisonment with hard labour. In commenting upon this case, Protector Galbraith expresses himself thus:

The three Aboriginals, even after arrest, did not understand the seriousness of their offence. This class of crime will increase very much in the near future. My reasons for saying so are as follows: Male Aboriginals employed on stations, and with other folk, are continually coming to my office, asking me to get them a gin. I also receive requests from station managers to the same effect. By both colours I am looked upon as a matrimonial agent, but, unfortunately, I am unable to assist them, as the female element does not respond. Most of the males are unable to go back to their own country for gins, owing to the fact that they were taken away as youngsters, and have forgotten their mother-tongue; also, distance, feuds, and other causes. A number of private families, also stations, have gins. Most of these gins have been given to their owners when about seven or eight years of age. These gins are not allowed to mix with other blacks. After a time, this enforced separation is strengthened by the girls' surroundings; they get attracted towards white men and look down upon males of their own race. The result of this means that semi-civilised males, being deprived of women of their own race, will gratify their sexual desires by committing assaults on unprotected women and children.

There were four prosecutions for assault: Donegan was discharged at Camooweal (12-2-3); Tommy received fourteen days at Georgetown (15-5-3); Willie was sentenced for assault on a female, to six months at Hughenden (21-1-3); Jimmy was discharged with a caution at Cloncurry (24-9-3) At Thursday Island, Protector Bennett says, there has not been any crime accompanied with violence by Aboriginals against Europeans during the year, nor, indeed, against others than Europeans.

Reports have been received re the following convictions for stealing: Burke and Ghillie Baloo, three months, Croydon (11-1-3); Micky, seven days. Pentland (5-2-3); Charlie, two months, Croydon (27-3-3), for escaping from gaol, he subsequently received one minute's imprisonment at Normanton; Costello, ex-tracker, six months, Maytown (—5-3), employment was sought by me for this boy on expiry of his sentence; Trina, Trickalima, Obingan, each three months, Thursday Island (15-6-3); Charlie, three months, Townsville (17-8-3); Norman, three months, Cooktown (17-8-3); Georgie, three months, Cooktown (15-9-3); Martin Kane, six months, Chillagoe (9-10-3); Leonard, two months, Nebo (23-10-3); Tommy, Peter, and Charlie, twenty-one hours' imprisonment. Cooktown (29-11-3); Charlie, two months. Cooktown (21-12-3).

One complaint from Herbert Vale has been made to Inspector Galbraith for cattle-stealing. For being in possession of property, reasonably supposed to be stolen, at Elliott River, near Bowen, Billy was fined £10, or three-months' imprisonment. For having beef, which he could not account for, Diamond and Toby each got six months at Burketown (7-7-3). The Minister authorised Toby's deportation to Mapoon, but in the case of Diamond, I wrote Protector Galbraith as follows: "I do not recognise sufficient evidence before me to warrant my recommending his permanent removal, and, unless this is forthcoming, consider that no harm will accrue if we allow him to return to his tribe, after a good caution from you. He will be in a position to inform his mates as to what penalties will certainly ensue if they persist in killing cattle."

On charges of being illegally on enclosed premises, &c., the following convictions were reported Sambo, three months, Mirani (2-6-3); Echo, six months, Croydon (—7-3); Johnny, three months, Chillagoe (7-8-3); Tommy, six months. Cooktown (3-11-3). Jacky, nine years of age, received six lashes for burglary at Burketown (20-5-3). Sandy was cautioned and discharged for obscene language at McKinlay (26-12-3).

# 1904

## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINALS FOR 1904 — ABORIGINAL CRIME.

With regard to cattle-stealing and firing country in the Croydon, Norman, Cloncurry and Camooweal districts, no complaints have been made to Protector Galbraith, except from Devoncourt Station, where an area was burned by blacks for hunting purposes. Complaints were received of alleged killing of sheep in the Goondiwindi area, but the Chief Inspector of Police did not consider the charge warranted and the two Aboriginals committed for trial at Hebel were discharged. At Boulia, there has not been any crime, and consequently no arrests- in fact the Protector O'Connor states that the aborigines of the district are most law-abiding and inoffensive. In the Longreach area, Protector Dillon received no complaints as to any misconduct on the part of the natives. Protector Garraway, reporting on the Coen district, states that with the exception of one or two petty thieving from miners' camps during the miners' absence, the Aboriginals have been fairly well behaved and little trouble given. Occasionally, also, a few vegetables have been taken from the Chinese gardens, but usually the Chinamen are to blame for allowing the blacks to come round when the police are away.

In terms of section 3 of the act of 1901, instructions for the removal of the following incorrigibles to districts far removed from their native haunts have been given to the Minister:

Freddie of Tambo who was serving a six months' sentence at Rockhampton Goal for stealing.

On the recommendation of Inspector Lamond. Rosie with her half-caste child Lily, was sent to Yarrabah. This woman has been a continual source of trouble amongst the bêche-de-mer fishermen along the coast north of Cooktown.

Toby [see last year's Report] who was sent from Lawn Hills to Mapoon as an incorrigible was detained at the Coen, where he was found attempting to make his way back.

Alice legally married to Jack sandwich, a south Sea islander, was removed from mount Buderim to Deebing Creek and the child left in the father's custody on the application of the Inspector of Pacific Islanders.

Spider Albeit, Jimmy Reid, Pahee, and Norman Rav, alias Tommy, all of them discharged prisoners, were at their own request sent to Durundur.

Papa an incorrigible [see last year's Report] escaped from Fraser Island and is believed to have been drowned while making his way across to the mainland.

Hero [see last year's Report], who was deported from the North to Durundur, and escaped in December, 1903, was arrested by the Palmer police. The Minister did not consider it worthwhile bringing him South again, and he was allowed to go to Natal Downs.

Friday [see last year's Report], another escapee from the same settlement, was found at Gorge Greek, a tributary of the Gape River. On the Minister's instructions, the police were informed that if the accused was not misbehaving himself, his rearrest was not advisable.

Seven other incorrigible escapees from Durundur were found by the police at Jordan Greek, Cairns, and instructions were given to have them brought back.

Harry Coates, Tommy Policeman, and Johnnie. A petition was received for the removal of all three, the first-mentioned of whom was serving a two months' sentence at Townsville.

The Minister authorised the local Protector to allow Harry to return to the McIvor River, where he had a wife and two children as it was considered that his late sentence would have a salutary effect on him. A strict surveillance was ordered to be kept over the other two.

For alleged murder at the Seven Rivers, Johnny, at Thursday Island (13-6-4), was committed to take his trial at the Circuit Court, Cooktown. Peter, a Cooktown Aboriginal, died from the results of spear-wounds inflicted by two Rossdale blacks, Blucher and Lubow.

For unlawfully wounding, Willie McLennon received 3 months at Cooktown (24-3-4), the victim assailed being another native, the trouble arising over a gin. Five other cases of assault were those of: Tommy, 2 months, Burketown (21-4-4); Fred, 6 months, Croydon (9-7-4); Bob and Mogg, 2 months each, Thursday Island (14-12-4); Jimmy, 4 months, Townsville (— 12-4).

There have been no cases of attempted rape brought before the courts. Frank Johnston, a young half-caste from Durundur, who had attempted overtures to a young European female, was publicly dismissed from the settlement.

Reports have been received re the following convictions for stealing: Billy, Jack, Tommy, 6 months each. Maytown (23-2-4); Major and Barrow, 6 and 3 months respectively. Cooktown (3-3-4); Parry and Dick, 6 months, Thursday Island (29-3-4); Daisy, 7 days, Burketown (11-2-4); Jack, 6 months, Coen (21-3-4); Pahee, 6 months, Tiaro (23-4-4); Billy, £1 or 48 hours. Normanton (27-3-4); George, 6 months, Maytown (17-4-4); Joe Echumpa, 3 months, Thursday Island (3-5-4); Willie, sentence suspended section 56 C.C., Townsville (14-6-4); Billy and Charlie, 1 month each. Cooktown (26-5-4); Tommy, 2 months, Townsville (2-7-4); Charlie, 14 days, Croydon (4-7-4); Billy Smith, 3 months, Mackay (27-9-4); Jimmy Haynes, 14 days, St. George (4-9-4); Harry, half-caste, 7 days, Roma (15-10-4); Christmas, 6 months, Thursday Island (25-12-4). In the case of Pahee, Mr Ranking, PM, Brisbane, reported that in his opinion the prisoner should not be dealt with by a bench of magistrates otherwise than through the medium of a competent interpreter." On his remand to Tiaro, however, "an interpreter in this case could not be obtained, but as Pahee understood what was said to him in English, the bench decided to hear the case without, and Pahee was convicted."

For breaking and entering, Spider received 3 months at Maryborough (26-4-4), and Tommy Williams 6 months at Tambo (13-7-4). On charges of being illegally on enclosed premises, &c., the following convictions were reported Jimmy Reid, 2 months. Taroom (21-6-4); Harry Coates, 2 months, Cooktown (17-10-4); Tommy, 6 months, Burketown.

Obscene and profane language was the cause of the following convictions: John Shendon, half-caste, £2 or 14 days, Childers (20-6-4); David Simpson, half-caste, £2 or 14 days, Charleville (18-8-4); Echo, £2 or 3 months, Croydon (28-8-4); Jimmy, £1 or 48 hours, Cloncurry (18-8-4); John Palmer £1 or 7 days, Cloncurry (7-8-4).

Disorderly conduct, creating a disturbance, &c., were responsible for eight prosecutions: Pablo, £2 or 14 days, and Don Macdonald, £1 or 14 days, Thursday Island (18-4-4); Mack, 5s., Cooktown (28-6-4); Tommy, discharged, Georgetown (30-6-4); Jack, cautioned and discharged, Charleville (6-6-4); Jack, £2 or 2 months, Thursday Island (15-7-4); Pickwick, £2 or 7 days, and Gilbert, £1 or 3 days, Cloncurry (9-8-4).

# 1905

## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF PROTECTOR OF ABOBIGINALS FOR 1905— ABORIGINAL CRIME.

Reports received from the various districts all tend to show that, as a whole, the natives are law-abiding serious crime being rare.

The Aboriginals at the Pascoe and Ebagoolah have committed a good deal of petty thieving from the diggers' tents at those places; but, as usual, the diggers are to blame for encouraging the blacks around their camps. Taking the blacks' behaviour all through the year, it has been very good" (Protector Whiteford, Coen).

There has been no serious crime amongst the blacks: two or three minor offences only have taken place" (Protector Nethercote, Charleville).

The blacks cause no trouble in this district" (Protector Savage, Roma).

There has not been any case of murder or serious crime reported in which Aboriginals were concerned or suspected" (Protector Quilter, Townsville).

There is little or no crime committed by Aboriginals, though during last April, in the course of a fight, a gin was murdered" (Protector Old, Normanton).

There has not been one single complaint to me from station-owners and others, since my appointment six months ago, of blacks killing cattle" (Protector Old, Normanton).

Analysis of Offences, as based upon the prosecution returns, which have to be forwarded monthly,

gives these results:

Disorderly conduct, creating a disturbance, 17: Thursday Island 5, Townsville 3, Burketown 2, Eidsvold 2, Hughenden 2, Childers 1, Isisford 1, Normanton 1.

Obscene language, 7: Alpha 1, Barcaldine 1, Childers 1, Eidsvold 1, Halifax 1, Hughenden 1, Townsville 1.

Stealing, 30: Cooktown 8, Thursday Island 5, Kilkivan 5, Camooweal 3, Herberton 2, Mackay 2, Nelson 2, Burketown 1, Cloncurry 1, Geraldton 1.

Illegally using cattle: Thornborough 2. Unlawful destruction of property: Hughenden 2.

Breaking open a railway truck: Cooktown 2. Found on premises for an illegal purpose 1 Cooktown 1.

Resisting arrest, 4: Thursday Island 3, Isisford 1.

Assault, 8: Mackay 4, Burketown 1, Charters Towers 1, Coen 1, Isisford 1.

The only case of rape brought before the courts was that of Frank Johnston, a young half-caste, who received a sentence of ten years at Brisbane (16th September, 1905): he had been publicly dismissed.

### **Sub-Inspector Shairpe**

James Cassady, Ingham, Lower Herbert, 11 June 1880 wrote:

Sir, Your Lower Herbert correspondent of the 15th ultimo evidently writes to contradict the truth when he states that he has been a resident on the river for many years, and never heard of a black gin having been shot or burnt in the district. ... a few years ago, a sub-inspector of native police was dismissed from the service for the shooting and burning of a gin named Kassey on Mr Cudmore's selection near the public road, Lower Herbert—not the Herbert River out west. A few days after this outrage occurred, the Premier of this colony visited the Lower Herbert and the matter was brought before that hon gentleman's notice. I could mention other cases of this kind if your correspondent is not satisfied with the above.<sup>582</sup>

William E Armit, Normanton, July 26 replied:<sup>583</sup>

Again, Mr Cassady gives you the story of the gin Cassy shot on the Lower Herbert, but this man belongs to a very different class of writer from "Outis," who merely states plain facts truthfully. I was at Bellenden Plains when the gin was shot, and can assure your readers that Mr Cassady is entirely wrong in leading them to believe that Sub-Inspector Shairpe shot Cassy wilfully.<sup>584</sup> Mr Cassady deliberately charges this murder to an officer, when he must be perfectly cognisant of the true facts of the case. Mr Shairpe was escorting a deserter named Alex, whom he arrested at Gairloch, back to Waterview, accompanied by a trooper (Simon) and the gin Cassy. When passing a point of scrub on Cudmore's selection, Alex, who was walking alongside the trooper's horse, made a bolt for the scrub, followed by Cassy. He was repeatedly called upon to stand, and was just on the point of entering the scrub when Mr Shairpe fired at him from the top of the bank. The bullet intended for Alex hit Cassy. I do not justify the officer's action, but at the same time I, for one, will not tax him with murder for what was purely an accident. Alex escaped at the time, and lived long enough to give us weeks of hard work years after. So much for Cassady's story.<sup>585</sup>

James Cassady, Fairview, Lower Herbert, September 15.

In your issue of September 14, William E Armit distinctly contradicts my statements re shooting of gin Cassie, and accuses me of harbouring the murderer of Mr and Mrs Conn. I did not mention the name of the white police officer who shot Cassie; but it was Sub-Inspector Shairpe, as stated by Armit. Armit states that he was on Bellenden Plains (which is sixty miles from here) at the time, and presumes he should know(!). Now, I was on the Herbert at the time, and my informant was Sub-Inspector Shairpe himself. Armit says both trooper and gin bolted into the scrub, and that Shairpe's bullet intended for the trooper unfortunately killed the gin. Very plausible story indeed! Let your readers judge from the following true facts of this murder if the gin was shot by accident or not: Alex was arrested at Gairloch, and when passing Farnham, Mr Shairpe told Simon to go on with prisoner, as he (Shairpe) was going in to Farnham to see Mr Atkinson, and would overtake him. Opposite Cudmore's, Shairpe overtook Simon who had only Cassie with him, Alex having bolted. Cassie asked Shairpe to allow her to go and she would bring back Alex, to which he replied with his

<sup>582</sup> Queenslander 26 June 1880 p 819.

<sup>583</sup> Armit, NP officer was dismissed on 15 July 1880 following allegations of drunkenness, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/armit-william-edington-de-marguerittes-2897/text4157>, published first in hardcopy 1969, accessed online 3 September 2020.

<sup>584</sup> QSA JUS/N35/72/218.

<sup>585</sup> Brisbane Courier 14 September 1880 p 5. Please note Armit's letter is abridged.

rifle, shooting her in the breast. Shairpe told Simon he would shoot him for allowing THE prisoner to escape and on reaching his barracks at Waterview the same night found all his other troopers had deserted, so had to keep Simon to assist him in recapturing deserters. Fortunate for Simon that his brother troopers had skedaddled!<sup>586</sup>

### **Trooper Dungaree.**

James Cassady of Lower Herbert in a letter to the *Queenslander* of 23 October 1880 made the following comments about Dungaree:

It is blasphemy for any person to say that the presence of the black police in the outside districts is necessary for the protection of the Aboriginals. Who ever heard of the Native Police protecting the blacks? I have often heard officers say, "The greater the scoundrel the better the trooper;" and from the following case it is evident the Government are of the same opinion: On the night of the 1 March last, a native trooper named, Dungaree attached to the Lower Herbert detachment, wounded an Aboriginal woman here (a stranger to him). He evidently meant to take her life. The wound was over 4in. long, on her right side, and her intestines were visible. She lay here ten weeks. All that time I found her in food, medicine, and attendance. I reported the matter to the Colonial Secretary, and what was the result? Dungaree was brought before the bench at Cardwell; he admitted the charge and there was very strong circumstantial evidence as well, which was given against him; but he was acquitted because the police magistrate said he was not enlightened enough to know the nature of the charge brought against him, and his officer stated in court that he was a thorough savage. Bearing such a character, I presume the authorities think it would not be wise to part with his services, so he is still wearing her gracious Majesty's uniform. Before he joined the Queensland police, he was charged with assisting to murder the crew of the *Douglas*, schooner, at Tam O'Shanter Point, or at one of the islands in that vicinity. With such men in the force, it is quite reasonable to suppose that they have done their work. Yes, the work of destruction unparalleled.<sup>587</sup>

### **Sub-Inspector M T Day.**

James Cassady of Lower Herbert went on to say in the same letter:

Take the case of the boy Tommy: He was recruited here about the end of November last, taken away against his wish from his wife; I might safely say a prisoner, as the sub-inspector here told me they would have to keep him in irons at night on his way to the Oak Park detachment. What must the other members of his tribe think of this? And should they seek revenge on innocent whites, are we not the aggressors? And to add to the brutality of this case, I am informed on reliable authority that this boy Tommy was shot while out on patrol at the Gilbert under Sub-Inspector Day.<sup>588</sup>

The Daily Journal of the NMP Oak Park camp for 1880:<sup>589</sup>

| March 1880 | Tprs in Camp | Gins in Camp | Horses in Camp | Remarks   |
|------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|---|
| Sunday, 28 | 6            | 4            | 30             | Sub-Insp Day and four Tprs absent on duty, Const and Trps in camp, Tpr Carey horse duty, Gilberton mail arrived about 8 pm. Sub-Insp Day returned to camp with three tprs and nine troop horses. Tpr Tommy shot by Sub-Insp Day in self-defence whilst on patrol. |

<sup>586</sup> Brisbane Courier 7 October 1880 p 5. Please note Cassady's letter is abridged.

<sup>587</sup> Page 530.

<sup>588</sup> Ibid., p 530.

<sup>589</sup> QSA Item ID86147, Camps at Craigie, Oak Parl & Herberton. This entry was certified correct by Sub-Insp. Day.

Sub-Inspector J O'Neill writing his memoirs in 1923, made the following observations regarding his time at the native police camp Craigie:

It was in November of 1878 that I first made the acquaintance of the native police, when I went as camp officer to Craigie. The detachments used to consist of a sub-inspector, half a dozen trackers, and a campkeeper or camp sergeant. The sub-inspector there was Day. The Craigie station lasted only about eight months, and I went on relief duty to Oak Park, fifteen miles beyond Lyndhurst, a place that has been very much in the limelight over Government purchases there. Day was discharged at Oak Park, and Sub-Inspector Nicholas took his place.<sup>590</sup>

The record is very sketchy about Maitland Tyrrell Day. There appears to have been no inquest held into Tommy's death. However, Mr Cassady seems to have got his story correct. Day must have been quietly let go.

## W E ARMIT.

During 1879, W E Armit carried out the duties of police prosecutor at the Brisbane city police court. On 4 September 1879, Sub-Inspector Armit, with six troopers, landed at Somerset on patrol duty on account of depredations by the blacks.<sup>591</sup>

Normanton, January 5, 1880. The Sub-Inspector of the Bynoe detachment of native police received notification it was to be broken up. Perceval Walsh of Iffley, Normanton, on 9 January 1880 wrote to A H Palmer, Colonial Secretary, saying "centred as it is amongst a numerous and mischievous coast tribe who are continually committing depredations around the township and interfering with the telegraph wire, it would be a most unwise move to shift it for a year or two. Far better would be it be to remove or break up altogether the Hughenden and Cloncurry detachments than meddle with this one." Walsh was advised that the native police station was to be moved 12 miles to a better location.<sup>592</sup>

Sub-Inspector Armit's accommodation was described as a disreputable humpy. In fact, a new camp in toto was required, and as there was no bark available, galvanised iron was to be used. The blacks were at their little game again. They killed a beast near town, and pilfered Mr Taaffe's station at the Twelve-mile. Sub-Inspector Armit was after them.<sup>593</sup> On Good Friday, March 26, 1880 at Normanton, Eleanor Euphemia Yeldham, the infant daughter of Mary and W E Armit, died of convulsions, aged 13 months 7 days.<sup>594</sup> While on duty at Thursday Island, he was accused of drunkenness. On 10 June 1880, he was dismissed on the following grounds:

The conduct of Mr Sub-Inspector Armit from which it appears that the intimacy existing between Mr Armit and his subordinates, as disclosed in his letter to Constable Nobbs of 6 June 1879 from whom he had borrowed a large sum of money which he was unable to repay, is so subversive of all discipline as to render Mr Armit's retention in the service no longer desirable. The Council advise that Mr Armit be dismissed from the Police Force.<sup>595</sup>

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<sup>590</sup> Brisbane Courier 29 December 1923 p 10. The Camp Daily Journal recorded that Sub-Insp Maitland Day delivered over to Sub-Insp William Nichols the NMP detachment at Oak Park on 21 May 1880. O'Neill is commenting on Nichols and the Irvinebank Massacre of 1884. See my book *The Irvinebank Massacre* by Paul Dillon, Connor Court Publishing Pty Ltd, 2021.

<sup>591</sup> Brisbane Courier 5 September 1879 p 2.

<sup>592</sup> QSA ITM847022, DR65820, 80/1916.

<sup>593</sup> Brisbane Courier 20 March 1880 p 6.

<sup>594</sup> Brisbane Courier 21 May 1880 p 2.

<sup>595</sup> QSA ITM844864.

On 29 December 1880, the Executive Council considered the re-appointment of Mr Armit and concluded:

Ministers now recommend that under the report of the Acting Commissioner of Police and the explanation afforded by Mr Armit that the minute of 10 June 1880 be rescinded and Mr Armit be permitted to re-enter the Native Police Force with the rank of Sub-Inspector. The Council advise as recommended. Confirmed 31 December 1880.<sup>596</sup>

On reinstatement as Sub-Inspector, first class of Native Police, Mr W E Armit started by the steamer *Corea* on 23 December 1880 for Carl Creek native police barracks, situated at the junction of the Gregory and O'Shannassy rivers 150 miles from Point Parker, and 240 from Normanton.<sup>597</sup> Burketown, January 28. The blacks were playing havoc in the district, killing cattle whenever they got a chance. They nearly wiped out one of Mr. Armit's troopers, and then tried to trap Mr. Hann. That old bird was not to be caught with chaff, however, and was still alive. There were two detachments at Carl Creek, under Messrs. Armit and Poingdestre. The powers that be certainly do not deserve any credit for the native police arrangements they bring about. A detachment was urgently required on the Port Darwin-road, on the Nicholson, and one was also required at or near Point Parker; yet two were located at Carl Creek, 100 miles from the Nicholson in a straight line, and no mail running.<sup>598</sup>

On 25 February 1882, second class Sub-Inspector Lyndon J Poingdestre was promoted to the rank of first-class sub-inspector.<sup>599</sup> On 22 March 1882, Sub-Inspector Poingdestre made the following allegations against Sub-Inspector Armit in a report to Sub-Inspector Tompson of Carl Creek:

1. The amount of £6 8. 9. has been overpaid to Messrs Brodie and Armit.
2. Mr Armit has falsely charged 150 gins' rations (£7 10. 0.) in August 1881 and also falsified his duty sheet for that month.
3. Messrs Watson Bros are paid £6 2. 0. for Sept & June Qtrs. 1881, this amount can only represent patrol rations, but Mr Armit also pays himself £9 4. 0. of patrol rations for Sept Qtr. 1881. Mr Brodie evidently receiving that for the June Qtr., 1881. This must be incorrect.
4. On my arrival at this station, 25 January 1882, the troopers made complaint to me of Mr Armit's nonpayment of their salaries, since my transfer from this station May 1881. On calling upon him to pay, he gave me £18 5. 8. The amount that was due in accordance with own statement is £22 6. 6. Therefore, there is still a balance due of £4 0. 10., which he does not seem inclined to pay. He has not furnished me with any a/cs of goods procured for the troopers for the £16 2. 0., also mentioned in statement on Messrs Watson Bros' receipt for same.
5. A receipt for £22 11. 6. appears amongst other office receipts; this amount is shown as being due to Mr Armit in statement of expenditure Sept Qtr. 1881. The receipt was not cancelled by him on 20 December 1881 but on 16 February 1882 and was a voucher belonging to this office.
6. Mr Armit ever since I have been in charge of this station has not shown the slightest interest in the service. He has never once visited the horse yard to examine the horses, very seldom rising from his bed until 11 o'clock.
7. (missing)
8. (missing)
9. I charge Mr Armit with disobeying my written instructions to patrol the Nicholson River where the services of the native police were urgently required. 200 head of cattle having been killed by the

<sup>596</sup> QSA ITM844867. See also, <https://policinghistory.com/blog/2018/2/10/william-edm-armit-the-qld-native-police-officer-part-1>, and H. J. Gibbney, 'Armit, William Edington (de Marguerittes) (1848–1901)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University.

<sup>597</sup> Telegraph 23 December 1880 p 2. QPG Vol. XVIII.] 8 January 1881 [No. 1, p 4.

<sup>598</sup> Queenslander 22 April 1882 p 486.

<sup>599</sup> Brisbane Courier 25 February 1882 p 6. GG VOL XXX.] 25 February 1882. [No. 29, p 429.

blacks and Mr Headley nearly killed, and instead of executing the above-mentioned patrol proceeded to Normanton without my knowledge.<sup>600</sup>

On 17 May 1882, Sub-Inspector W Armit made the following allegations against Sub-Inspector L Poingdestre.

1. With falsifying his books in returning rations at two shillings which never cost that price.
2. With falsifying the ration-book and returns from 1 July 1880.
3. With misappropriation of 1360 dry rations from Messrs Clifton & Aplin Bros A/C.
4. With misappropriation of gins' ration monies for Sept to December quarters, 1880. Said monies although due to James Burns, never having been paid to that firm.
5. With defrauding the government of seven bags of salt, which he returned in Incidental Vouchers; the government having paid the carriage on same, and thus recharging the government for their own salt in meat a/c.
6. With receiving monies from Const Spencer for govt. beef and not accounting for same.
7. With bringing two gins into this camp which did not belong to the detachments and cohabitating with one of them named Lucy.
8. With conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman in calling me "a bloody liar" on the evening of Saturday, the second of April, when speaking to me on official matters.
9. With causing the errors in the ration a/c at this station, in that he knowingly made misrepresentations to me when taking charge, stating that the rations in camp cost 1/9 and those on patrol 2/- & 2/6 and that all rations were uniformly returned at 2/- to cover cost of patrol rations, and of producing his letter to you of date 21 February 1881 in corroboration of his statements.

Sub-Inspector Tompson of Carl Creek was appointed to investigate the allegations made against each officer and report to the Commissioner on the matter. In the matter of Poingdestre v Armit, Sub-Inspector Tompson's findings were:

2. The Ration Book shows the issue of 5 gins rations daily throughout the month of August 1881, and Sub-Insp Armit's duty sheet shows continuous patrol during that month. The camp journal shows that Sub-Insp Armit and all troopers were in camp during the month. Mr Armit explains that these rations were issued to afford the troopers the mid-day meal whilst working in camp, and that he issued them in this way rather than send in a contingent voucher for troopers' extra rations.
3. Mr Armit's books are incorrectly kept, though there are no defalcations nor has he received more moneys than he was entitled to beyond the 2/- per rations. He has signed a receipt for all patrol rations and put in others from squatters for the same rations which make a balance appear against him.

On 31 May 1882, Tompson reported to the Commissioner of Police, Brisbane:

As there are several charges in both cases, I have adopted this method as more concise and will, in this report traverse my findings so as to lay the matter before you as clearly as possible. Poingdestre v Armit.

Charge 1. It appears that Mr Armit received all the money for patrol rations, filing in his receipt in the office and on paying others the respective amounts due took their receipts and filed them also, showing double payments.

Charge 2. This is a bad case and shows Mr Armit unfitness to be in charge of a Police Station. Mr Armit explanation "that it was to afford the mid-day meal for troopers at work" is not borne out by the camp journal which shows only "gallows" erected during part of the month, the rest of the month showing "no work" or "gardening" by the troopers. The expense of "gardening" should, I think, be borne by the officer. By sending in a contingent voucher for £13 1. 0. for troopers' dinner rations in

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<sup>600</sup> QSA ITM564982.

the following quarter, Mr Armit shows he knew the proper course to pursue for troopers' "dinner rations" when at work.

Charge 3. Mr Armit's books have been incorrectly kept though there are no defalcations.

Charge 5. It is hard to reconcile Mr Armit's plea of mistake in drawing and signing the receipt for £22 11. 6. with the fact that the same amount appears opposite his name in the September statement of expenditure and in the station cash book. The obliteration of his name is evidently of more recent date than the erasure infers, for which reason I have appended the receipt for your inspection. Mr Armit however did not pay himself the money.<sup>601</sup>

The Governor-in-Council dismissed 1st class sub-inspector W E Armit from the police force with effect 14 April 1882 for discipline and financial irregularities.<sup>602</sup> Captain Armit sailed from Cooktown on 22 June 1882 for Thursday Island, en route for New Guinea, as special correspondent for the Melbourne *Argus* in New Guinea.<sup>603</sup>

Whilst at Normanton on 28 January 1883, Armit wrote to the Colonial Secretary, Brisbane:

I submit the following facts not to obtain reappointment but cancellation of the sentence of dismissal. (Armit rehashes the evidence taken by Sub-Insp Tompson and rejects his conclusions. However, Armit does admit to falsifying the record re: patrol duties but says "a fault committed only to enable me to give my men some extra and much needed food.") The residents of the districts have been informed that I was dismissed for embezzling £90 of government funds. I ask you, Sir, to cancel my dismissal and either discharge me or allow me to resign.

Then on 18 April 1883 at Normanton, Armit wrote to the Under Colonial Secretary, Brisbane:

I acknowledge receipt of your letter of 13th ultimo informing me that the Colonial Secretary cannot reopen my case as there was ample evidence to warrant my dismissal from the force. But I have still to learn that an officer is to made the victim of the malversation (sic, malversation) and favouritism of others or that it is just to try a man by the decision of one who was himself culpable. I refunded £80 in nine months and Mr Poingdestre leaves three times that sum unaccounted for. He turns his camp into a brothel and feels so confident in his own power that he has even now got his gin and half-caste boy living at Bynoe with him. As I stated in my letter, I have no desire to rejoin.<sup>604</sup>

William Eddington de Marguerite Armit (colloquially known as Captain Armit was born in Belgium in 1840. His father was an Englishman, a colonel in the Royal Engineers. W E Armit served a period in the navy. He came to Queensland in 1868, and went through his "colonial experience" at Dotswood station near Townsville. In 1871, he joined the native police and was sent to the Bellenden Plains, Murray River, 20 miles north of Cardwell, and afterwards, successively to the Lower Herbert, the Cashmere [sic], and the Etheridge stations. His botanical researches and donations of North Queensland flora to Baron von Mueller resulted in his becoming a Fellow of the Linnean Society; he was also a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. Twice he was called from the Etheridge to take charge of the white police of Brisbane, and he was afterwards posted at Normanton. Reverses overtook him there, and at the time that the Melbourne *Argus* sought him out, he was doing hard yacker for small wages.<sup>605</sup>

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<sup>601</sup> QSA ITM564982. Please note this an abridged version of the report.

<sup>602</sup> Qld PG Vol. XIX] 8 July 1882 [No. 14 p 114 & GG Vol. XXXL] 8 July 1882 [No. 7 p 83. Telegraph 8 July 1882 p 5.

<sup>603</sup> Brisbane Courier 28 June 1883 p 5.

<sup>604</sup> QSA ITM562917. Please note this an abridged version of his letters.

<sup>605</sup> Figaro 8 December 1882 p 15. H. J. Gibbney, 'Armit, William Edington (de Marguerittes) (1848–1901)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/armit-william-edington-de-marguerittes-2897/text4157>, published first in hardcopy 1969, accessed online 3 October 2020.

## Sub-Inspectors Fredrick Clerk and Alfred Smart.

It came to the notice of the Colonial Secretary that the native police camp in the vicinity of Cloncurry was in a state of disorganisation. On 22 March 1884, he instructed R C H Uhr, police magistrate to hold an inquiry into the conduct of Sub-Inspectors Frederick Clerk and Alfred Smart. At the Court House, Cloncurry on 27 March 1884, the following charges were preferred against Clerk and Smart:

**Sub-Inspector Frederick Clerk:** intemperance and making use of abusive and insulting language towards Sub-Inspector Alfred Smart, also assaulting Smart and going about the camp in a state of nudity and countermanding orders given by his superior office – not guilty of the charges.

Absent from camp on the night of 15 January 1884, returning to camp at 8 o'clock am morning of 16 January in a state of intoxication and making use of abusive language towards Mr Smart – I admit the absence from camp I was in the bush all night. I arrived at the camp about daylight. I deny the other charges.

Appearing for days in town in a state of intoxication; appearing on the parade ground at the NM Police camp in a state of nudity and causing one of the troopers to bring him a gin; fighting in barracks with a man named Bell – not guilty to the above charges. The last, fighting with a man named Bell, I plead guilty to under extenuating circumstances.

Disorganisation and fighting with Constable Cameron – I admit fighting with Constable Cameron.

With insubordinate and insulting conduct towards Sub-Inspector Urquhart on 15 March at Cloncurry and with conduct generally unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.

**Constable Donald C Cameron:** charged with creating a disturbance and behaving in a disorderly manner and also making use of obscene language in the presence of several people at Lows Royal Hotel, also refusing to obey the orders of Sergeant Lacey – plea of guilty under great provocation.<sup>606</sup>

**Sub-Inspector Alfred Smart:** frequent acts of intoxication and neglect of duty generally through said cause and failure to make returns to the proper departments - Mr Smart expressed a wish to plead guilty to the above charges and a plea of guilty entered accordingly.

On 28 March 1884, R C H Uhr, police magistrate advised the Under Colonial Secretary that the charges were proved against Mr Clerk and recommended his services be dispensed with; Mr Smart pleaded guilty, with a strong recommendation he be given another chance under an efficient office; and Cameron pleaded guilty claiming great provocation, on account of his previous good character would advise fine and reprimand. On 9 May 1884, the Executive Council dismissed Clerk and Smart from the police service.<sup>607</sup>

## A BLACK TRACKER IMPRISONED.

The arrest and imprisonment of a police black tracker marked another epoch in Mr Inspector Morisset's career of despotism. Ever since that officer was placed in charge of the Rockhampton police division, dissatisfaction has run rampant, the subordinate members of the force, tired and wearied of the anxious times they have had to go through, perform their various duties in a half-hearted and perfunctory sort of way, with the natural consequence that the citizens of the town suffer with them.

Jerry, the tracker, claimed to have three months wages (amounting in all to £2 0s. 6d.) due to him, and for this amount he applied to the Inspector. Mr Morisset replied to the request by proffering (through Constable Jennings) an order for £1 which was to be spent on clothes, or necessaries only; the blackfellow not to have any cash at all. Jerry objected to these terms and

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<sup>606</sup> Constable Donald Cameron, Reg No. 252, apologised to Sergeant Lacey in writing and resigned from the police on 22 October 1884, QPG 1884 p 237. See p 102 above.

<sup>607</sup> QSA ITM847118 DR77995 part 3, 84/2927; ITM564448 DR58293, Smart; ITM563142 DR58216 Clerk.

forthwith returned the order by the constable to the Inspector. For this act, his arrest was ordered and his incarceration followed.<sup>608</sup>

## CHARGES AGAINST INSPECTOR MORISSET.

The following special report was presented to his Excellency the Administrator of the Government by the members of the Civil Service Commission deputed to proceed to Rockhampton to investigate certain charges made against Mr Inspector Morisset:

1. Overbearing and Tyrannical Conduct. Looking at the evidence now produced before us in support of similar charges in Rockhampton by men, several of whom have been for many years in the Service, and whose official records are unblemished, and from observation of their demeanour when under examination, we are satisfied that the charges under this head have been established.
2. Imprisonment of Tracker "Jerry." Inspector Morisset was further charged with having imprisoned tracker "Jerry" in the lockup for some act of insubordination. This he admitted, and attempted to justify on the ground of discipline and the practice in former years when dealing with the native police. He also stated that he had engaged "Jerry" under the Masters and Servants Act, in order that he might have more control over him; but was unable to point to any provision in that Act which empowers him to imprison a servant. We, therefore, find that Inspector Morisset acted illegally and exceeded his powers.
3. Using Government Forage for Private Horses. The charge of having three private ponies fed on government forage for about ten days is also established.
4. Employing Police at Private Residence. We further find the charge against the inspector of employing three or four constables for several days at his private residence, and of leaving the town under the protection of only one policeman for several hours on the 6th, 7th, and 8th December last to have been proved.
5. Rations for Native Trackers. It is clearly proved by the evidence that the previous practice in Rockhampton has been to charge the department the actual contract price for rations supplied to native trackers—namely, 2s. a day for a tracker and his gin. Inspector Morisset claims that he has a special arrangement with the Commissioner of Police which justifies his charge of 2s. 6d. per day for a tracker and his gin, and his consequent rejection of the contractor's vouchers of 2s. each for the same rations. As there is no corroborative evidence of Inspector Morisset's statement, we must leave this matter to be dealt with by the department; at the same time, expressing our opinion that any system which enables officers in the Service to charge more than actual disbursements on public account is highly improper, and should be promptly discontinued.
6. Burial of Paupers. A written requisition for the burial of a child had been issued by Senior-Sergeant Love by direction of Inspector Morisset, who says that it was issued on condition that the parents should be required to refund the expenses incurred. No such condition appears on the requisition issued to the contractor. There is no excuse for the inspector refusing to pay the money due for the performance of that work. Whatever difference might exist on the subject between him and Senior-Sergeant Love as to the requisition.
7. General Disorganisation. Inspector Morisset expressed a desire to tender evidence as to disorganisation and want of discipline existing in the force at Rockhampton. This we declined to receive on the ground that the maintenance of discipline was a matter entirely in his hands, subject to the sanction of the Commissioner of Police. But knowing, as he admits he did, that the men received him with feelings of antagonism, he did not, in our opinion, exhibit that discretion, judgment, and tact, which would have assisted to remove that impression, and have induced a more zealous performance of duty. On the contrary, it appears from the evidence that he adopted a course which intensified the feeling of antagonism, by placing men in positions repugnant and derogatory to them, on the plea of the exigencies of the service.

### Recommendations.

1. Looking at Inspector Morisset's long service and reputation as an able officer, we are of opinion that the charges proved against him will, on this occasion, be met by transfer to another district,

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<sup>608</sup> Daily Northern Argus 9 February 1889 p 5.

combined with a caution that, on a repetition of similar exhibitions of temper and irregularities, he will be compelled to retire from the force.

2. Under the circumstances, we are further of opinion that it would injuriously affect the discipline of the force in the Rockhampton district if Constables Scott and Howard were retained on the station. We therefore recommend that each should be removed to a different district, under another inspector.

3. We recommend that Constable McCaffrey be transferred back to Rockhampton.

4. We recommend that Constable Campbell be deprived of his long service pay of £10 per annum, and that he be debarred from promotion for a period of three years. All of which we have the honour to submit for your Excellency's consideration. (Signed) T H Unmack, Chairman. W M Williams, Commissioner.<sup>609</sup>

Mr Unmack, on the debate of the second reading of the Civil Service bill, 1889 noted:

We did bring up a report which will convince every right-thinking man that on the evidence before us the charges made against Inspector Morisset were conclusively proved; and we made a recommendation, an exceedingly mild one—that he should be removed from Rockhampton. What was the result? The result was that Inspector Morisset is there still, and a further result is that the exigencies of the service have required that most of the constables who gave evidence against him should be differently treated and removed. That was the counterpart of their recommendation, and I say that the labours of the Commission were treated in a hostile spirit by the present government. Why? I take it because they were appointed by the last Ministry. The Premier replied: This will be dealt with specially on another occasion.<sup>610</sup>

On 5 July 1891, Mrs Morisset and family arrived in Brisbane on the *Eurimbla* from Rockhampton.<sup>611</sup> On or about August 1891, the Commissioner of Police received a telegram from Inspector A L Morisset of Roma regarding the murder of an aboriginal at Mitchell.<sup>612</sup> Therefore, in mid-1891, Inspector A L Morisset was transferred to Roma.<sup>613</sup> On 12 May 1893, First Class Inspector Aulaire Liddiard Morisset retired from the police force and became a superannuant.<sup>614</sup>

### **Sub-Inspector Alexander Douglas**

An enquiry was held in Brisbane into the truth of charges brought by Mr Hamilton, MLA, against a Sub-Inspector Alexander Douglas of the Queensland native police, of having committed atrocities on natives in the north.<sup>615</sup> Messrs Pope Cooper and Virgil Power sent their report to the Colonial Secretary entirely exonerating Douglas of charges brought by Mr Hamilton, MLA, against him.<sup>616</sup>

The following is a brief resume of the inquiry:

The very serious charges made by Mr John Hamilton MLA were two in number:

1. Sub-Insp Douglas with his troopers and a white man came across some blacks and although they were innocent of having committed any outrage that they shoot several, and captured a female, quite a child who after being washed by his trooper in a creek was taken to the camp and ravished by them.

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<sup>609</sup> Brisbane Courier 12 April 1889 p 6. See also: Morning Bulletin 14 Mar 1889 p 5, 15 March 1889 p 5, 15 March p6. Daily Northern Argus 15 Mar 1889 p 3 Mr. G. L. Lukin on Inspector Morisset. Queensland Figaro and Punch 6 Apr 1889 p 3. Brisbane Courier 25 March 1889 p 6 MORISSET INQUIRY.

<sup>610</sup> Hansard LA, 12 June 1889 p 216.

<sup>611</sup> Brisbane Courier 7 July 1891 p 3.

<sup>612</sup> Brisbane Courier 27 August 1891 p 4.

<sup>613</sup> There is at the moment no discoverable official documentation of this transfer.

<sup>614</sup> QPG VOL. XXX.] 15 July 1893. [ No. 28 p 244.

<sup>615</sup> Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 30 November 1880 p 4.

<sup>616</sup> Telegraph 21 December 1880 p 2.

2. Sub-Insp Douglas handcuffed a trooper to his gin and when in that position had him shot. (Vide Mr Hamilton's two letters to the Colonial Secretary dated respectively November 1, 1880 and November 13, 1880.)

Regarding the second case, the trooper was identified as Corney and the date of his death was the month of June 1875. (The inquiry reviewed the evidence presented in the second charge.)

On the first charge, the inquiry said "The essential part of the first charge stands unsupported by any evidence.

The inquiry advised A H Palmer Colonial Secretary:

We are therefore of the opinion that the charges which we were requested to investigate are altogether unsubstantiated by the evidence, and we acquit Sub-Inspector Douglas of the several serious imputations made against him.<sup>617</sup>

### **Sub-Inspector B R Stafford**

Sub-Inspector B R Stafford arrived in Cooktown on 4 May 1880. About this time while patrolling the Endeavour River, Trooper Georgey was in the lead. Stafford directed him to proceed to a former camp but he took the patrol seven (7) miles off course. On discovering this, Stafford struck him with his open hand on the side of the face; the trooper raised his hand to return it whereupon Stafford ordered him to dismount, had him handcuffed and made him walk back the seven miles. Confessing his mistake and promising it should not occur again, Stafford let him go.

On the evening of 20 June, a gin warned Stafford that the troopers would kill him. Stafford had them put in irons and then flogged the malcontents, as he called them, to prevent them carrying out their threat of killing him. He left them in irons and then on 22 June he marched them to Cooktown still in irons. After a few miles, he gave the order to stop; as he dismounted, the troopers attacked him with stones. Georgey grabbed Stafford's rifle and fired at the campkeeper, Constable Hoog but missed. He then grabbed Stafford's revolver from his belt and attempted to shoot Stafford when Jerry intervened and the revolver went off and Jerry was wounded. This allowed Stafford to regain his rifle and point it at the trooper who promptly ran away. The deserters removed their chains and escaped into the bush.

However, Jerry returned to Stafford. Four of the infuriated demons were at large in the district; the fifth was captured and stands committed for attempted murder. The Commissioner of Police wrote to the Colonial Secretary on 6 July, "I find great difficulty in understanding how it was that Sub-Inspector Stafford and his campkeeper armed and mounted could have been so easily overpowered by five native troopers unarmed and in irons but I feel convinced that an officer who could let his detachment get into such a condition and so completely lose control over his men should never again be trusted with the command of native troopers."<sup>618</sup>

Stafford was discharged from the police force on 24 July 1880.<sup>619</sup> He was reappointed in 1881; Sub-Inspector Stafford, from the Laura River, succeeded Mr Johnstone.<sup>620</sup> Then in 1888, Sub-Inspector B Stafford was appointed police magistrate and registrar of births, marriages, and deaths at Thargomindah, in the room of P W Pears.<sup>621</sup>

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<sup>617</sup> QSA ITM3690250, 81/296. See: Kirkman, Noreen Suzanne (1984) *The Palmer goldfield, 1873-1883*. Honours thesis, James Cook University of North Queensland p 302.

<sup>618</sup> Telegraph 5 July 1880 p 2. Queenslander 31 July 1880 p 134. QSA Item ID 847027 80/3846 pp 139-172. QSA Item ID 847146 85/1100.

<sup>619</sup> Qld PG Vol. XVII] 11 September 1880 [No.19, p 138.

<sup>620</sup> Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser 2 March 1881 p 2.

<sup>621</sup> Warwick Argus 29 May 1888 p 2.

## Sub-Inspector George Dyas

The Murder of Sub-Inspector George Dyas. The *Northern Standard* of February 8, 1881 published the following reports:

Sub-Inspector F M Thompson to Inspector Maxwell Armstrong.

Dyas left Georgetown a little after myself on 8 January, and overtook me at my first camp. We travelled together to the Gilbert River, and then parted at 10 am on the 11th, he going to Normanton with a constable, and I to patrol down the river. He was undecided whether to go by the road or the line from Creen Creek, the former being 100 miles with abundant water, and the latter sixty with only one watering-place, and that not easily found by a stranger. I advised him to keep the road, which he promised to do on parting. My present impression is that he missed the watering-place on the line, and having then lost his horses in consequence. They (the horses) were never far from the camp whilst with me. Poor Dyas, his end was sad, and his sufferings something terrible.

Sub-Inspector James Lamond to Sub-Inspector F M Thompson, Creen Creek, 30 January, 1881.

Sergeant Byrne, Fielder and McGrath (constables) came to my camp on Sunday, at 11 pm, and reported Sub-Inspector George Dyas missing from the Forty-mile since Friday, the 14th, he being on foot. It appears they lost their horses, and in looking for them they both got lost, McGrath finding his route again, but Dyas evidently failing to ascertain his position. McGrath waited for Dyas until Sunday morning, but did not fire a shot on Friday night. On the Monday, I came to the Forty-Six mile. All day Tuesday, I was looking about getting Dyas's tracks away from the other man's; there had been four heavy storms on the tracks. Yesterday, I was running them from sunrise to sundown, never even waiting for dinner. The tracks of Mr Dyas are circled. I used to cut off a lot of travelling by getting his tracks and finding their crossings. From the Friday till Saturday night, he had no water. We followed him then onto the Rocky Creek, where there is plenty of water and plenty of blacks' tracks. Mr Dyas ran the Rocky up first, but I think the blacks must have hunted him, for he came down again, and kept the creek till he got within about two miles of the telegraph line, when he sat down and took off his boots and walked up the bank. There was an end to him as far as continuous tracking was concerned. At the mailman's camp, I found a bare white footprint made on Thursday morning. It goes down the creek to some horse tracks and then disappears. When I found that it was sundown, and I thought naturally that the mailman had picked the lost man up, I came to where I now am. I do not know why the mailman should go barefooted, and the Sergeant has not seen him as yet. I do not think Mr Dyas will leave the creek - no water for forty or fifty miles on one side, and none for twenty on the other. If he does, he will have to husband his strength. As long as he kept on his boots, I had him, but he has gone the right way to baffle tracing by taking them off. Mr Dyas has a double-barrel gun with him and cartridges, so that if he keeps on the creek he would live for a month, save that he might fret and so injure his chance. The blacks are spearing men at the Twelve Mile.

Sub-Inspector Thompson, Dunrobin, Georgetown, 26 January 1881 to Inspector Maxwell Armstrong.

The following telegram from Sub-Inspector Lamond: Found Sub-Inspector Dyas's remains on Sunday morning, 23rd instant, speared, stripped, and buried by blacks. From traces, judge that he was speared on Thursday morning, 20 January, while asleep. Blacks on spearing him ran away, but returned at daylight to rob and bury him. He, on being speared, must have fired gun, turned over, and bled to death. No signs of struggling. Blacks have taken clothes, gun, &c. Opened grave and saw white man interred. He had written Dyas on ground half-mile from camp. Could not get tracks away from scene of murder; have his bridle and cartridge belt empty.<sup>622</sup>

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<sup>622</sup> Brisbane Courier 16 February 1881 p 5. Capricornian 19 February 1881 p 15. QSA ITM567091 DR50933.

It was subsequently advised by Sub-Inspector Lamond that he had recovered from the blacks, Mr Dyas' clothing, pieces of his gun, and a watch and gold chain.<sup>623</sup>

In the Legislative Assembly on 16 August, Mr O'Sullivan presented a petition from Mrs Sarah Dyas, widow of the late Sub-Inspector George Dyas, who was murdered in the north by the blacks, praying for relief.<sup>624</sup> On 22 September, Mr O'Sullivan moved that a sum of £1,000 be placed on the Supplementary Estimates of this year, as a gratuity to the widow and daughter of the late First-class Inspector of Police, Dyas, who lost his life in the Bourke district whilst in the execution of his duty. It was the case of a widow and her orphan child coming to the House to ask for that support of which they had been deprived through the death of a servant of the State, as no provision was made for widows and orphans in the relevant legislation. He had a letter from the Commissioner of Police, which stated that the Inspector had been in the service about seventeen years, that he had joined in June 1864, been promoted in 1871, and killed in January last.<sup>625</sup> Two years ago, he became entitled to a half-pay pension. His salary was £250 a year though why it was only that sum, whilst some first-class inspectors were getting £385, he could not say. Mr O'Sullivan said Mr Dyas had lost his life in the execution of his duty. The grounds on which he based his motion were the letter from Mr Seymour, who said: That the time of his death, which occurred on 31 January 1881, whilst on his way from Georgetown to Normanton, in which town he had received orders to reside.<sup>626</sup>

The Colonial Secretary said it was his duty as a member of the government to oppose the application. He did not think the hon member had shown any reason why money should be granted to the widow and child of a man who, through a misfortune, lost his life in the Public Service. Dyas certainly wanted to retire, but could not get the medical certificate that he was unfit for duty. Dyas left the camp to look for a horse and lost himself; he was followed up and it was found that his body had been buried by the blacks. The widow made an application for her husband's pension instead of the gratuity provided for by the Act. The case was brought before the police authorities, and it was found it could not be done. The report of the Commissioner of Police, after stating the case, showed that the gratuity due to the widow under the 25th clause of the Act was a little over £347; and the Executive minute on the report recommended that the gratuity should be paid to the widow from the proper fund; and it had been paid. He did not think the Government could go any further. He strongly objected to this kind of motion being brought forward at all, and he therefore opposed it.<sup>627</sup> The motion for the payment of a gratuity to Mrs Dyas was lost. However, it came to notice that Mr Dyas was insured for £500 with the Colonial Mutual Insurance Company, and that payment would be made as soon as the requisite formalities were complied with.<sup>628</sup>

### **Sub-Inspector Henry Pollock Kaye**

Then in July, Sub-Inspector R M Moran was transferred and replaced by Sub-Inspector Henry Pollock Kaye from the Diamantina. Mr Kaye received several "requisitions" and had been on regular patrol including the middle branch of the Cloncurry where the blacks had been spearing cattle.<sup>629</sup>

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<sup>623</sup> Week 5 February 1881 p 6. QPG Vol. XVIII] 5 February 1881[No. p 20.

<sup>624</sup> Brisbane Courier 17 August 1881 p 3. Hansard LA, 16 August 1881 p 328.

<sup>625</sup> Dyas was promoted to First-class Sub-Inspector on 13 July 1877, QGG Vol XXI 14 July 1877 No. 4 p 97.

<sup>626</sup> Hansard LA, 22 September 1881.

<sup>627</sup> Hansard LA, 7 October 1881 p 887.

<sup>628</sup> Queenslander 29 January 1881 p 136.

<sup>629</sup> Brisbane Courier 27 July 1881 p .5

Then the Commissioner of Police received the following telegram from Sub-Inspector Nichols at the Woolgar:

Sub-Inspector Kaye was speared though the heart by the blacks on 14 September 1881. The murder took place on the main road between the top camp and the reefs here. I am taking Mr Kaye's detachment and my own out after the murderers.<sup>630</sup>

The following particulars of the above incident were published by the *Brisbane Courier*.

Mr J A Holmes, Oak Park, Dalrymple  
30 September

Some time ago I telegraphed to you respecting the murder of Sub-inspector Kaye by the Aboriginals at the Woolgar on the 14th instant. Knowing Mr Kaye since 1867, as he and I came out to Brisbane in the *Flying Cloud*, and having met him in the colony since, I feel it a duty to give publicity to the dreadful and bad end he has met. The circumstances, as I describe them, are authentic and true in every particular. It appears on 12 September, Sub-Inspectors Kaye and Nichols met on the Woolgar goldfield. The following day (the 14th), the populace of the Woolgar sent a petition to them to remove the blacks from the town, as they were beginning to steal and commit other acts of felony. On receipt of the petition, those two officers determined to get the blacks away from the place by the gentlest and most persuasive means they could use; they therefore mustered them together to put them in front of them to drive them away. The means used were so gentle that no thought of resistance ever occurred to any, and instead of having the full complement of native troopers to accompany them, they only took one boy. However strange to say, it struck them that possibly they might have more trouble than they anticipated, and it was decided that one should return to hurry up the remaining troopers. Mr Kaye said, "You have the best horse, Nichols; you go back." He left him, and in fifteen minutes when Nichols returned Kaye was a dead man. Immediately after Mr Nichols left, a Mr P E Smith, who was also of the party, on looking round had only just sufficient time to save himself, as a spear grazed his shirt; his next thought was about Mr Kaye, and to his horror he found the poor fellow just fallen off his horse, resting on one knee, with a spear through his body 10 inches, having penetrated about the fourth rib of the right side, and entered his heart. He never spoke; his death was almost instantaneous. A short time elapsed before Mr Nichols arrived on the scene, and I leave anyone to imagine what his feelings must have been. I believe Mr Kaye's troopers were dreadfully distressed, and what they did—or what people say they did is a matter I am not able to write about. I may say this, however, that as much as Mr Nichols could do in conformity with his duty he did; and I think the occurrence has cast a terror over the district. Not many months ago letters appeared in your journal as to the management of the blacks, and means were proposed for abolishing the native police and bringing the blacks in by gentle and conciliatory means. Here is a case where everything was done to show the blacks that no harm was meant them, and in the face of it we have the murder in the most coldblooded manner of a fine young fellow. Mr P E Smith, who is a stockowner, had been for some days out with Mr Kaye on the tracks of the blacks, as they had nearly murdered two of Mr Smith's stockmen. These tracks at length led them to the Woolgar, where the Aboriginals had taken refuge, well knowing how impossible it would be to identify them amongst hundreds of others! and it is estimated that the blacks numbered about 800 at the time of the murder, although the police were only removing some thirty or forty. It is a wonder that others did not meet the same fate as Mr Kaye. I know of one gentleman—a storekeeper (Mr Carson)—who would have been certainly killed only for the timely aid of a young fellow who deliberately knocked down the would-be murderer with a shovel. As to the late Mr Kaye, he was a thoroughly good officer, a most popular man, and a favourite wherever he went, I remember him as a joyful, merry fellow, when I was myself a boy, and I used to listen to his stories of Australia with astonishment and pleasure. I feel, and all will feel who knew him, that this poor fellow has met his death at the hands of these treacherous black wretches in trying to do his duty, and to endeavour to conciliate our poor blacks by means of kindness.

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<sup>630</sup> Telegraph 23 September 1881 p 2.

A few words about sub-inspector Nichols and those who assisted in rendering the last tribute to the departed gentleman. Mr Nichols was most persevering and energetic in bringing to light the perpetrators of the crime, and has done all that can be done in this remote region to have the matter fully investigated. He rode to Georgetown after leaving the Woolgar in safety, and no doubt has sent in his official report to headquarters. Mr Kaye was buried on the 15th instant at the Woolgar, and the funeral was attended by everyone who could be present to the number of about sixty, who followed the remains of a fine noble and gallant fellow to his last resting place.<sup>631</sup>

The mother of Sub-Inspector Kaye, Lady Kaye, on hearing of his death arranged for a tablet to be forwarded to Woolgar, and it was erected on the grave on 7 July 1884 by Mr Redman, of the police, assisted by Mr Jerdan. The tablet bears the following inscription:

Sacred to the memory of Henry Pollock Kaye, late Sub-inspector of Native Mounted Police, eldest son of Sir John Kaye, of the India Office, and of Lady Kaye, his wife, who was murdered by Aboriginals at the Woolgar, while in the execution of his duty, on the 14th of September, 1881, at 35 years. This tablet is erected in affectionate remembrance by his mother.<sup>632</sup>

### **Cadet Marcus Beresford**

Death Notice. On 24 January 1883, murdered by the blacks at Cloncurry, Marcus Gervaise De La Poer Beresford, youngest son of the Hon and Rev Dr George De La Poer Beresford, of Fenagh, County Leitrim, Ireland, grandson of the Lord Archbishop of Tuam, cousin of the Marquis of Waterford, of Curraghmore, Ireland.<sup>633</sup>

The depositions taken at the inquiry into the death of Mr Marcus Beresford, of the native police force, who was murdered by the blacks on the night of 24 January, about twenty-four miles from Farley head station, in the McKinlay Ranges, were as follows:

On 17 January, Mr Beresford, in charge of five troopers, left Devoncourt station for Chatsworth. Nothing further was seen of him by white men until the report of his murder was brought in by three of the troopers, all of whom had been badly wounded. The other two reached Farley head station, but were too badly hurt to proceed further. It was stated that Mr Beresford had been killed by the blacks while asleep, and his body was found, as the troopers had described, rolled up in blankets and lightly covered over with sand. The skull and forehead were smashed in, and there was also a spear wound in the right thigh. All round where the body lay were tracks of the blacks, and a great quantity of their implements of war were strewn about, many of the latter being stained with blood. All the witnesses agree in the belief that there is no reason to suspect the troopers of foul play. Indeed, the two troopers who reached Farley head station had quite a number of spear points in them, and the other three, as before stated, were severely wounded. A grave was dug on the spot, and, on the order of Mr A A Hart, JP, the body was interred. A rough head and foot stone were put in the ground to mark the place of his burial, and the grave was paved round with rough stones, to keep the heavy rains from washing the earth away.<sup>634</sup>

The following additional particulars of the murder of Mr Beresford by the blacks is from the Normanton *Herald* of 17 March:

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<sup>631</sup> Brisbane Courier 19 October 1881 p 3. Morning Bulletin 6 Oct 1881 p 2. See also, The native police under scrutiny, Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland volume 15 issue 6: pp. 279-293, Hillier, Alan J. Brisbane, Qld.

<sup>632</sup> Brisbane Courier 26 July 1884 p 6.

<sup>633</sup> Brisbane Courier 4 April 1883 p 1; Qld P G Vol. XX] 17 March 1883 [No. 6, p 65; Qld Deaths 1883/C/374.

<sup>634</sup> Queenslander 24 March 1883 p 469; Western Star 24 March 1883 p 2. QSA ITM2726165.

The troopers state that on the night of 24 January they were camped in the McKinlay ranges about twenty miles from Farley, and had bailed up a mob of blacks. They all camped. During the night the blacks made a raid upon them, killing Mr Beresford at the instant with a two-handed nulla nulla, and at the same time all the troopers were pounced upon by four or five niggers to each. One trooper received three spear wounds, but got away and caught a horse, putting the hobbles round his neck, and rode him twenty miles to Farley Station, carrying portions of the broken spears in his body, which were afterwards extracted by Mr Hart. Trooper Charlie, after being speared through the thigh and arm, and having several wounds on the body, was caught by a blackfellow, who tried to throw him, but he struggled to get his rifle, which one of the mob was trying to fire off, but did not understand its manipulation. Charlie succeeded in getting hold of it, and, freeing himself of the one holding him, shot the other, thus dispersing the mob. The four troopers then turned their attention to Mr Beresford, who lay mortally wounded, in fact, dying, as he only lived a few minutes; the only words he spoke were, "Boys, I am dying." The troopers then remained there till daylight, when they rolled him up in his blanket and covered him with sand and bushes. They then got the horses and packs together and started for Farley, but were met on the road Messrs Hart, Chapman and Bell, who, on the information of the first trooper, had started out. They passed onto where Beresford lay and found that the blacks had returned after the troopers left and had battered in his skull with stones. They then buried the body and found the statement of the troopers correct. The party then proceeded on the blacks' tracks and followed them to the head of the William. The country being very rough, and the horses not being shod, they returned to Farley Station, where they were met by Sergeant Lacey's party, where a magisterial enquiry was held. A volunteer party of eleven then started out in pursuit of the murderers, well equipped, and are still out.<sup>635</sup>

IN MEMORIAM  
M. G. BERESFORD.  
BRUTALLY MURDERED WHILE DOING HIS DUTY.  
EACH one that knew him will feel his sad loss,  
Robbed of his life while in health, strength, and beauty,  
Ever the friend of the helpless and lost,  
Soul of honour in all things—in every transaction—  
Faithful and true to the wife he adored;  
Oh! why should fate so cruel, unrelenting,  
Remove from our midst those that least we can spare?  
Denied the lost solace, a wife's loving care.

N. A. BERESFORD.<sup>636</sup>

## Kimberley Murders

Telegraph to Commissioner of Police from Inspector A Douglas, Georgetown, 24 November 1887:

Oct 28, J W Jones pilot wired from Kimberley eighty blacks here, great trouble.<sup>637</sup> Have tried to disperse them to be removed. Fitzgerald wired Poingdestre 31<sup>st</sup> to patrol and see Jones. Poingdestre started Nov 2, but was unable to proceed more than a mile as he was suffering from a severe attack of haemorrhoids so he despatched his campkeeper, Constable Lonigan who he says returned on the 6<sup>th</sup>. Everything having been done in a satisfactory manner, the above he reports by letter dated 7<sup>th</sup>. On the 21<sup>st</sup> Brannell wires man named Bray states six Aboriginals shot lately Kimberley by native troopers three dead bodies now lying there. I instructed him to inform Poingdestre and to wire further particulars at once. He wires P.M. and Dr visit Kimberley today and hold enquiry. Have directed Brannell and Poingdestre to attend and wire results from Kimberley.

<sup>635</sup> Queensland Times 3 April 1883 p 2 & Brisbane Courier 31 March 1883 p 4.

<sup>636</sup> Brisbane Courier 4 April 1883 p 6.

<sup>637</sup> The Telegraph Station at Kimberley (Karumba), was at the mouth of the Norman River. The river extends south-easterly 50 miles in a tortuous course to the township of Normanton, where the navigation ceases.

Telegraph to Commissioner of Police from Sub-Inspector P Brannelly, Normanton, 25 November 1887:

Three dead bodies blacks were seen at Kimberley by Bray and Currie on Sunday 13 November. Same bodies were again seen by Buzzza on Wednesday morning last. The place visited again yesterday by same witnesses; bodies were completely removed in addition to two others; we discovered horse tracks found near bodies and several police empty Snider cartridges; have no doubt the murder was committed by Poingdestre's troopers and bodies removed; the evidence will pretty clearly show this. Constable Lonigan had charge of the troopers at Kimberley on the third; Poingdestre unable or unwilling to go.

Sambo, a trooper:

I went to Kimberley about two weeks ago with Mr Lonigan and some other troopers I camped at Kimberley with Sergeant. I was camped there two days. We spelled the horses. We camped there one night. Next morning, we drafted out six blackfellows. They went out on the plain. I could not speak with them as I did not speak their talk. Neddy, a trooper spoke to them. I do not know what he said. Ned talked a lot to them; they were his countrymen. Ned did not tell me what he said to them. Five troopers went with Mr Lonigan. Lonigan stayed at the camp near the telegraph station. When we left, Mr Lonigan was at the telegraph station. I cannot say how far away we put the niggers. I cannot say how long we were away. I do not know why the six niggers were put on the plain. No one told me to do so. Mr Lonigan told us to draft the boys out. He said there were too many blacks knocking about and that the misses at the telegraph office did not like it. Lonigan told us to let them go on the plain. We put them alonga plain. I cannot say how many miles we took them. We put six niggers alonga plain. I am sure it was six. I do not know the names of any of them. Some of them had trousers. Two had shirts on. Four had trousers on. Two had nothing on. They were flannel shirts. I do not know what colour. We were on foot when we were drafting the niggers out. The horses were alonga bush. I had nothing in my hand, not even a stick. I have been one year in the police. I have never been out among niggers before. I have always been alonga camp. I do not know where the rifles were. We left them at the camp. When we drove the niggers out in the plain, I did not hear anyone fire a shot. We went out without firearms. We left Kimberley in the morning after driving the niggers out. After leaving Kimberley, Salisbury and I left Lonigan to go and drive the niggers to the camp where the others were. We left him at the niggers' camp. It was the camp where we had left the others in the morning. Nearly twenty blackfellows were at the camp when we took the one back. He was one of the six black boys we had put out on the plain in the morning. I see the red shirt produced. None of the six boys we put out on the plain in the morning had a shirt like that. I did not see the nigger with the red shirt on when we put the one black boy back in the camp; the five we had put on the plain in the morning were out there. It was about one hundred yards from Kimberley. I saw about 20 niggers in the camp. I did not see those we had put out on the plain in the morning. After Salisbury and I had put the boy in the camp with others, we came back onto the road. I do not know how long it was before we came to Mr Lonigan and the other boys. When Salisbury and I went back after the single blackfellow, our rifles were on the packhorses. Salisbury had his rifle on his saddle. My rifle was on the packhorse. I did not carry it like Salisbury. I did not take any cartridges to Kimberley. I saw Salisbury shoot at alligators in Walkers Creek. Sambo.<sup>638</sup>

### **Murder of Edmund Watson**

Police Office  
Paterson  
3 July 1889

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<sup>638</sup> Morning Bulletin 12 December 1887 p 5 & Telegraph 14 December 1887 p 2. QSA ITM3690254 DR111084. Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia 1788-1930 Newcastle: University of Newcastle, 2017-2022, <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.13/1340762> (accessed 27/06/2024).

Inspector Murray  
Cooktown

Report on the pursuit of the murderers of Mr E Watson at Pine Tree Station in May last:

Having taken over the Paterson detachment from Sub-Inspector Poingdestre on May 17, I started on the morning of 18 May together with Mr G Watson, 5 troopers and 13 horses. Travelling good stages and losing no time, I reached York Downs on 22 May having reported to you from the telegraph stations on the way. At York Downs, I met the 5 troopers of the Coen detachment in charge of Constable Doherty and took them under my command. I also met Messrs Kennedy, Nicholls and L Watson who had followed the tracks of the murderers from Pine Tree.

Next day, I sent trackers out to look round and they returned in the evening reporting that they had found a large camp but that the blacks had left it and split up into two lots going in different directions. On 24 May, I started upon the tracks of the largest mob taking a gin from York Downs to act as interpreter. I came up with the tail of them on the afternoon of 25 May but they were in a swamp full of water and timber and so many escaped arrest. Though when they refused to stand, they were fired upon; very little execution was done upon this occasion. Again, taking up the tracks, I came up with a large mob on 26 May in a dense fern scrub covering about 5 acres of ground which I succeeded in completely surrounding. I then parleyed with the blacks trying to induce them to come out and give up the murderers but without avail. After some time lost in this way, the blacks got together in a body and made a rush to break out on one side of the scrub but it was well defended and they were driven back. I then, while keeping a mounted guard outside the scrub, proceeded to tackle them on foot with Mr Watson and some troopers. This was dangerous work owing to the thickness of the ferns and vines. It was there that while moving forward to attack, I received a spear in the right thigh as reported to you by telegraph. In stepping back to try and get a better view of where the spear came from, I tripped and fell over a vine. Mr Watson seeing this and the spear sticking in my clothes thought I was seriously hurt and in coming to my assistance narrowly missed being speared himself. My wound was trifling, the spear not penetrating above the barbs.

None of the murderers escaped from this scrub and their identity was fully established by Messrs L Watson and W Nicholls of Pine Tree to whom they were well-known but there were yet others missing. Again, taking up tracks I came up with the leading lots on 28 May in three different scrubs in which the work of following them had to be done on foot and was successfully so done but upon no occasion was it possible to bring the blacks to listen to parleying. They resist at first with spears and when that fails break and scatter in all directions. At one of these last scrubs, three of the troopers were narrowly missed by spears which these blacks throw with uncommon force and precision. Upon this day also the murderers were identified beyond a shadow of a doubt. Upon 1 June, I again left York Downs in pursuit of the other lot who had split off from these, following them down to the tidal waters of the west coast but here though we came up with their camp they evaded us. I then made for Merlunah, Mr Watson's station and despatched Constable Doherty to Mein for flour and he on his return having reported that blacks had cut the telegraph line 10 miles north of Mein. I left Merlunah on 9 June picked up the blacks' tracks and came up with them on the Batavia River on 11 June, dispersed them and recovered telegraph wire iron pins and insulators in their camp. I then followed another mob for two days in rough ranges but was obliged to abandon the tracks owing to none of the horses having shoes on their feet. I reached Mein Telegraph Station on 15 July (sic, June) and here I sent Constable Doherty with the Coen troopers back to their barracks. I reached Merlunah again on 18 June passing Pine Tree Station, the scene of the murder on my way; spelled the horses and then started for Paterson. The return journey occupying nine days and being devoid of all subject requiring special notice. The troopers suffered considerably from fever while out and Mr G Watson and I are now ill with dysentery.

In reference to the murder, I beg to report that from my enquiries and investigation, I am entirely convinced that the attack on the two unfortunate men while sleeping on the veranda at Pine Tree was as treacherous, dastardly and entirely unprovoked a one as has been recorded, and the punishment that has befallen them has been none too heavy for the tribe of ungrateful savages, who

planned and carried out this attack upon men who had benefited and fed them as far as their limited resources would allow.<sup>639</sup>

### **Senior-Constable A Wavell.**

Mr F Hann, writing from Lawn Hill on 29 October 1889:

The blacks have been very troublesome here of late, and I had been out after them and had most of the firearms with me. I had been away part of three days. I returned home just before sundown on Sunday, 27 October. My Chinaman cook was in the garden, and came running over to me and said Flick was in my dining hut, and that he had shot Constable Wavell dead. I galloped up the hill, and on the top was Mr Doyle, with two of my men and two of the troopers keeping guard over the hut.

Mr Doyle told me that Wavell, with the troopers, had tracked Flick from the Turn-Off Lagoon and come on him in one of my paddocks and got his horses. Flick, seeing the troopers, cleared. The troopers could not get their horses through the fence, so jumped off their horses and followed Flick on foot. He ran over the ridge, through the tailing-yard and up into my men's hut; turned over everything there looking for cartridges, but found none. He whips out of there, runs past the saddle-room, and into the dining hut. Unfortunately, I had just left a box of 450 cartridges there and my breech-loading gun with 100 cartridges. Wavell in the meantime, was up in the paddock. Mr Doyle happened to be there, too. Bird, my man, was on the hill and saw what took place. He immediately ran and told Wavell where Flick was. Wavell immediately galloped down in front of Mr Doyle and up the hill, jumped off his horse and went towards the back of the hut—this hut has six tin windows—going up with a revolver in his hand to within about twenty-five paces, when, without any warning, Flick jumped up and fired through the window at him. Wavell fell dead instantly. This was at about midday. One of my men witnessed this from a farther hut.

As soon as I heard all particulars, I called on Flick to surrender. He said he would not come out, but would surrender to me if I came up to the hut. I walked up to the back window whence he had shot Wavell. He put out his hand and shook hands with me. I pointed out what he had done. He said, 'I suppose I'll swing for it.' I told him I did not see any other thing for it. I stopped talking to him, and explained to him that he had best surrender, as he would only be shot. He had no revolver in his hand at this time. He said if I came round to the door he would surrender. I walked round to the door and opened it with my left hand. As soon as I did so he shot me in the left breast, the bullet passing out behind the shoulder. He had another shot at me, but missed me. I fired back at him when a few paces distant, but after his second shot he again shut the door, and I missed him. I then ran under shelter of the bank as I knew he had plenty of ammunition. I was bleeding very much, but happily the wound is not dangerous, which is a most miraculous escape, as the powder burnt my shirt. I then told the troopers to riddle the hut, which was done in every direction. Unfortunately, there was in the room a pine board table, 8ft x 4ft of 1½in boards, and also several hardwood stools, of which he made a barricade. When it was dark, I told them to cease firing and to watch the place, as I felt confident that he must be either dead or seriously wounded.

But at about 10 o'clock a thunderstorm came up, and it was so dark that you could not see your hand. At daylight I gave orders to go up and see if he was in the hut, and they found that he had been wounded, as there was blood all over the place, and had escaped during the storm. The two troopers and two of my boys tracked him up under command of Mr Doyle. They tracked him down the hill and across a small creek at the foot of the hill and going down the bank of the big creek, which is heavily fringed with long grass and water pandanus, which is peculiar to this creek and the Gregory. There were three large tea-trees growing at the edge of the water. It was quite impossible to see anything which might be planted in there, and when my two boys got within twenty yards of this, Flick was planted there, and he shot one of my unfortunate boys, the ball entering the breast and coming out at the back. Blood directly poured out of his mouth. As soon as this took place, Mr Doyle and the troopers fired into where the shot came from. My poor boy ran a little way into a

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<sup>639</sup> QSA ITM665852. Queenslander 1 June 1889 p 1013. Capricornian 18 May 1889 p 7. Morning Bulletin 20 May 1889 p 6. Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia 1788-1930 Newcastle: University of Newcastle, 2017-2022, <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.13/1340762> (accessed 27/06/2024); lists 4 incidents with 80 Aboriginals killed. See page 139 above.

hollow and lay down. I went down and saw the boy was fatally wounded. Mr Doyle told me exactly how it was done, as he was a few yards higher up. Seeing Wavell shot, and then myself, and now my poor boy, I gave directions to riddle the place from a distance, as it was quite unsafe to venture near the spot, as we could not see how he was situated, while he could see everything that was going on; and we could see that it would never do to allow him to escape, and I saw by the way he was working it was his object to shoot as many persons as possible. About an hour after this he fired another shot, but evidently the cartridge was wet, as it only puffed.

Noble, the trooper, fired at once into this place, and I think this shot must have disabled him. The place was then again riddled. I had the place watched all day, as it was too risky to send anyone to ascertain whether he was dead or not. During the night, I had the station watched, as I knew if he was not fatally wounded, he would sneak up to the place for rations, but with no results. Mr Doyle and the troopers went down this morning and went into the place. The fires that I had lit had burnt away the grass during the night and left the place clear, which enabled them to see the place better, and they found that he was dead and that nine shots had struck him. They got the gun loaded and the revolver also loaded, as well as all the spare cartridges. I had him buried on the spot this afternoon, as I did not consider that it was of any importance where a fiend like this should be buried. I had a proper grave made, and a coffin of galvanised iron, and had poor Wavell buried yesterday morning and my poor boy this morning.

I cannot speak too highly of the pluck shown in this affair by poor Wavell, as he had evidently made up his mind to lose his own life or capture Flick; unfortunately, the poor fellow lost his life. The conduct of the two troopers was very good throughout. Had it not been for Mr Doyle's presence, I fear very much that Flick would have got away. I am thoroughly convinced that he would have shot people indiscriminately from the cold-blooded way he shot me. Mr Hollway, who arrived yesterday, in talking the matter over afterwards, pointed out that his object in shooting me was to obtain my rifle and cartridges, by which means he would be able to shoot the others. I should mention that throughout he used a .450 revolver. Had he shot Mr Doyle he would have had the place, and then there is no knowing what the results might have been. I sent a messenger yesterday to Burketown with telegrams of particulars to Inspector Douglas.

I have put the facts of the case before you now, which cannot be denied. I do not know what the public will think of our action in this matter, nor do we care. As I for one know, I was doing a public service in securing this desperado dead or alive.<sup>640</sup>

### **Dora Dora Blacks.**

Two blacks were recruited in February 1890 to go to Victoria as trackers for the Victorian police for five years. They were from Fraser Island. Their trooper names were Jackie and Willie, but their native names were *Booyal* and *Thunimberrie*.<sup>641</sup> The Victorian Government Gazette of 24 April 1891, offered a reward of £20 for information leading to the apprehension of two Queensland aborigines called Jack and Willie, who were employed as black trackers at Benalla. One of the deserters was suspected of the murder of an elderly woman named Smith at Benalla. They were seen near Tatong on 18 March 1891, where they camped the previous night and left some clothes behind; they were on foot; neither of them had any money, and they were believed to be in the bush somewhere near the River Murray. Their descriptions were: Jack, about 22 years of age, 5 feet 6 inches high, light build, small features, small moustache, very small sideboards, active appearance; speaks English fairly well; wore grey-tweed clothes, and black soft-felt hat. Willie, 20 years of age, 5 feet 5 inches high, round full face, medium build; wore tweed suit and brown soft-felt hat. They had other clothes with them in addition to those described.<sup>642</sup>

On their way north, Jack and Willie were suspected of killing Severyn Murezkiewicz, a selector, residing at Basin Creek, near Dora Dora, Upper Murray, who died in the Albury Hospital from

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<sup>640</sup> Brisbane Courier 19 November 1889 p 3. Morning Bulletin 7 November 1889 p 3. Queenslander 21 December 1889 p 1159. QSA ITM2730107.

<sup>641</sup> Daily Examiner 2 August 1923 p 6.

<sup>642</sup> Victorian Government Gazette, 6 May 1891. QPG 1891 p 223. Age 25 April 1891 p 8.

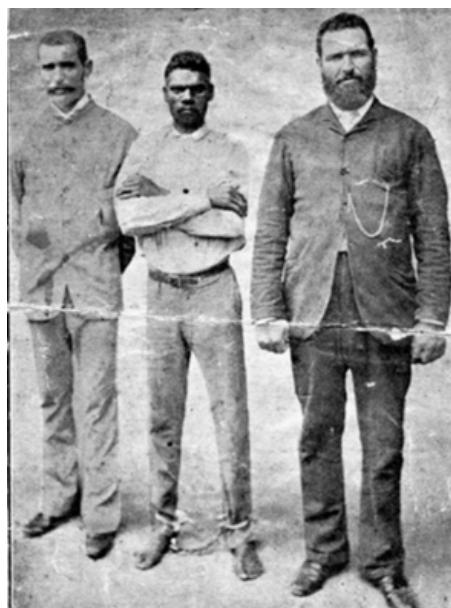
the effects of spear-wounds inflicted by two aborigines on 2 May 1891. Consequently, a warrant was issued by the Albury Bench for their arrest on a charge of having wilfully murdered Murezkiewicz. A reward of £50 for the arrest of each offender was also offered by the Government of New South Wales.<sup>643</sup>

On 5 January 1892, the following notice appeared in the Queensland Police Gazette:

Jack and Willie, who are aboriginal natives of Queensland, have recently been seen near Armidale. It is believed they are making towards Queensland. Their native names are *Gowanah* and *Koonamberry*. The former is a native of Fraser Island, and the latter a native of Maryborough. They will no doubt try to reach their native places, and the police on the border stations are to be on the lookout.<sup>644</sup>

Willie, one of the Dora Dora blacks, who was captured by Senior Constable N T King, of Mount Perry, near the Bundaberg Show Ground, was brought before the Police Court on 10 December 1893. He was remanded to Maryborough, and left for that place by the afternoon train securely shackled.<sup>645</sup> Senior Constables Thomas and Nathaniel King arrived in Mackay on 10 February 1894, bringing with them *Bulyal*, known as Jacky, the Dora Dora black, who was arrested by them on 26 January 1894 at Stewart's Peninsula, but who escaped again while pretending to get a drink at a creek. Jacky was rearrested by the King brothers on 9 February 1894.<sup>646</sup>

On 10 April 1894, Jacky and Willie were tried before Mr Justice Foster at the Circuit Court, Albury and were found guilty of murder with a recommendation to mercy for Willie. Both prisoners were sentenced to death.<sup>647</sup> The Executive Council on 15 May 1894 commuted the death sentence passed on the Dora Dora blacks to imprisonment for life in the case of Jacky and fifteen years' imprisonment for Willie.<sup>648</sup> The King brothers, Queensland policemen, received £50 each for catching the Dora Dora blacks.<sup>649</sup> Dora Dora Blacks - *Bulyal* aka Jacky after capture with Senior Constables Nat (on left) and Tom King.



Queensland Police Museum

<sup>643</sup> New South Wales Police Gazette and Weekly Record of Crime 20 May 1891 [Issue No.20] p 175.

<sup>644</sup> QPG 1892 p 25.

<sup>645</sup> Brisbane Courier 11 December 1893 p 5

<sup>646</sup> Brisbane Courier 12 February 1894 p 5.

<sup>647</sup> Brisbane Courier 12 April 1894 p 5.

<sup>648</sup> Brisbane Courier 16 May 1894 p 5.

<sup>649</sup> Worker 2 June 1894 p 3.

## **Constable Edward Lanigan.**

Death of Constable Lanigan, Reg No. 390.<sup>650</sup> The shooting of Constable E Lanigan on 6 September 1894.

It appears that the Aboriginal Jackey Norman, a big hulking fellow was wanted for robbing the camps of miners. He was carrying water for a Mrs Burke on the outskirts of Montalbion when the two mounted constables McLoughlin and Lanigan rode up. He at once fled, but they soon heard him, and he ran and seized hold of the bridle of McLoughlin's horse. McLoughlin fire over his head and asks him to surrender, whereupon Jackey exclaimed: "Let me go to house first," meaning Mrs Burke's, where he had two spears and a woomera. McLoughlin then dismounted and seized Jackey, but foolishly did not replace his revolver in his pouch, seeking to hold the boy one hand and put his revolver away with the other. In the struggle, the black got possession of the revolver. Lanigan also dismounted, and approaching the struggling men called out "Drop the revolver or I will shoot you." At this time McLoughlin was behind the Aboriginal, with his arms around him, trying to keep him from shooting him, and his hands down so that he could not aim at Lanigan, who still came on Jackey, however, his arms up and fired at Lanigan, who was about fifteen yards away, who instantly put his hand to his left breast and said: "Oh, my God, Mac I'm done for." Lanigan was game to the last and, staggering over to the struggling men, died as he threw his arms round the struggling black. The impact of his body knocked the pair down, and Lanigan's bleeding body fell across them. The struggle still continued and Lanigan's body was thrown off, and rolling on his back remained there. The black still held the revolver, and despite McLoughlin's efforts, fire it at him the bullet going between the policeman's legs. The pair then struggled to their feet, McLoughlin doing his best to point the revolver, which he now also had hold of, at his opponent, while the black was of the same mind. At last McLoughlin wrenched the weapon away and Jackey, who was mad with rage and fear, bounded for a rock about 10lb in weight and threw it at McLoughlin. It missed him and the constable fired at Jackey but the shot took no effect. The latter ran away, and though McLoughlin attempted to fire the revolver it wouldn't go off, the muzzle and works being filled with grit. McLoughlin was too exhausted to follow the black who escaped, but who on the Sunday following was captured by Constable Higgins and other troopers on an almost inaccessible mountain five miles west of Montalbion. A large crowd, attracted by the shooting, soon assembled, but Lanigan was quite dead before Dr Jack, who was in attendance in a few minutes, saw the body. The bullet entered Lanigan's chest between the fourth and fifth ribs on the left side and embedded itself in the spine. Jackey, on being charged at the watchhouse with the murder of Constable Lanigan said, "I don't care a b—," and afterwards said he shot at Lanigan. On Friday the deceased was buried in Irvinebank cemetery, over 250 persons following the body to the grave. Constable Lanigan was Acting Clerk of Petty Sessions, and was generally respected as an efficient and honest Government officer.<sup>651</sup> Cairns, October 11. In the Supreme Court before Mr Justice Cooper, the only criminal charge was against Jackey Norman for killing Constable E Lanigan at Montalbion, 6 September 1894. The charge was reduced to manslaughter. The jury found Jackey Norman guilty and the judge sentenced him to imprisonment for his natural life.<sup>652</sup>

## **Murder of Donald McKenzie of Lakefield Station.**

Precis from papers re Murder of Donald McKenzie of Lakefield Station, Cook District.

29 April. Mr Madge, Manager of Breeza Plains Station, reported to Police that Donald McKenzie owner of Lakefield Station killed by blacks and thrown into a waterhole. Station looted of arms, ammunition and stores.

30 April. Inspector Lamond reported murder to Commissioner of Police and asked for special train to enable him to send all available police to Lakefield, special train was arranged for and

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<sup>650</sup> QPG 1894 p 262.

<sup>651</sup> Northern Miner 18 September 1894 p 4. QSA ITM847511 DR63931, 94/10390.

<sup>652</sup> Northern Miner 12 October 1894 p 3. QPG 1894 p 323.

Inspector Lamond instructed to do his utmost to secure offenders. Same day Constable O'Regan with two native police troopers left Laura, for Lakefield. Constable Whelan and two native police troopers left Musgrave for Breeza Plains and Lakefield. Constables Waters and Hardy with eight native police troopers left Cooktown by special train to Deighton thence Lakefield. The Maytown Police were also sent as soon as possible.

5 May. Princess Charlotte Bay natives were supposed guilty of this murder and also of Frank Lee and party some time previously and Senior Constable Smith with Constable Bateman and native police troopers left Cooktown on May in the Pilot Cutter *Evelyn* to patrol coast and proceeded to the Flinders Islands and from there to the Normanby River met on 10 May, Constable Whelan in charge of the land party, who were ferried across the Normanby River when the parties separated Senior Constable Smith's party continuing the patrol along the coast and amongst the islands in search of the offenders without success, returning to Cooktown on 11 June. Constable O'Regan reports that he with 2 troopers left Laura on 30 April arriving at Lakefield on 1 May and found McKenzie's body on the bank of the lagoon in the garden it having been previously removed from the water by Mr Madge, Manager of Breeza Plains. The body bore the following wounds - speared on left side of navel with barb protruding - all right side of face broken in by hoe handle, both legs split, four teeth broken and knocked out, deep cut on back of head supposed caused by woomera, large and deep wound under left eye, wound on left temple, several on shoulders, arms and chest looked as if caused by butcher's knife; several of which were stolen from McKenzie's kitchen by the blacks. A grave was dug by the Constable and troopers and McKenzie's body buried. There appeared to be indications of McKenzie having made a desperate fight. Three blackboys were employed at Lakefield named Breeza, Toby, and Billy; Breeza was away at Breeza Plains Station for packsaddles. Tommy was horse hunting and Billy was at the stock yards weeding. Billy states that shortly after breakfast on Wednesday the 29th, three blackboys named Charlie, Jimmy and Harry came to him at the yard and wanted him to go away to the black's camp Cr. the opposite side of the Normanby, he could also see two boys named Toby and Johnny talking to McKenzie from outside the fence one of the three boys that was at the yard named Charlie went to the garden and joined Toby and Johnny. After some time, the three boys at the garden and the two at the yard joined and went to the house. McKenzie must have been killed at this time and was evidently killed by Johnny, Toby and Charlie. The five boys then broke into McKenzie's house and removed almost everything portable, some trousers and flannels, three rifles 1 Winchester, 1 Snider and 1 M.H. rifle, 2 boxes Winchester cartridges, and some Snider and M.H. cartridges also all the flour and sugar from the store, some beef and cooking utensils. The Snider rifle and some cartridges were found by the party on Sunday 3 May at a Black's camp. The Winchester and M.H. rifles and ammunition are still in the possession of the Blacks.

Constable Whelan reports that on 30 April he left Musgrave with 2 troopers for Lakefield Station via Breeza Plains arriving on 2 May meeting there the Laura and Eight-Mile Detachments. Followed blacks track down the Normanby River towards coast and came on bodies of four dead blacks continued following the tracks and, in a camp, came on the body of another dead black also found a Snider rifle and Martini Henry ammunition, some flour and three dampers which had been thrown away by the blacks. McKenzie kept large stock of strychnine at Lakefield which the blacks when looting the store must have mistaken for soda and acid, mixed it with the flour and been poisoned. In following the black's tracks several camps of blacks were met with who were interviewed but no trace of the offenders, who are known as "Harry" "Tobey" and "Johnny" could be obtained. It is possible that they may, as well as those found, have been poisoned. The other arms stolen have not been recovered but it is considered best to wait till the blacks settle down and return to their old hunting grounds.

Police Department,  
Cooktown, 9 September 1896.

Commissioner of Police,  
Brisbane. Copy Confidential

Re finding dead black bodies in bush while Native Police were after the murderers of the late Donald McKenzie of Lakefield station on the Normanby River near Princess Charlottes Bay, I have the honour to report that as directed by your code wire of 31st ultimo I patrolled to Lakefield and followed the tracks of the murderers for about five miles to one of their main Camps - About 2 miles from Lakefield I came across the remains of a gin, but there were only a few bones left where she had died, the rest of the skeleton

having been broken up and eaten by dogs, hawks and other bush vermin - About a mile further on the remains of a blackfellow were found, they were in the same condition as those of the gin and about a mile further I came to one of their main camps - In it found the remains of 2 more bodies, but they were like the others, the only portion intact being the skulls so that it was impossible to get the contents of any of the stomachs as dogs etc., had dragged the remains all about the camp. In this camp I also found 2 different pieces of damper which had been thrown away and about 15 or 20 lbs flour in a bag. All these must be heavily poisoned as it is evident birds etc., had been at them but had not tried them a second time. A Winchester Rifle, loaded, and 6 Martini Henri cartridges were found in this camp, evidently "planted" by the blacks or thrown away after they were poisoned. On this matter I wired you on 7th instant as follows:

"Yours 31st ultimo - It is generally believed that blacks used arsenic for baking powder after murdering McKenzie and robbing store - In blacks camps found small bag flour and remnants of two dampers also remains of four black bodies but dogs and other bush vermin had completely broken up skeletons only skulls remaining intact - Have secured the flour and dampers - Please reply what you wish done with them - Found also one Winchester Rifle and six Martini cartridges which had been thrown away by blacks after the poisoning - Skeletons and bones of bodies had been dragged considerable distances so that it was impossible to get any contents of stomachs. Full report first mail from Cooktown."

There are many more skeletons still in the bush, as the bodies were found by the Police over a distance of 20 miles, but as there was no hope of getting any of the bodies or stomachs, I saw no good would result from going further as what bodies would escape the bush fires would be in the same condition as those I found viz. useless for the purpose of getting any of the contents of stomachs for analysis.

Since Lakefield station was taken up and stocked, the blacks have often given much trouble - About 12 or 15 years ago the late owner was speared right through the chest - the store has been robbed over and over again and once the blacks attacked the station with firearms - When robbing the store, the blacks always took everything including firearms ammunition and everything portable.

Previous to being murdered the late owner was for from 7 to 10 days by himself on the station so that it will never be known for certain how the blacks were poisoned. A 2-quart bottle of arsenic was on the station very nearly full, it has now about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a pint of arsenic in it, so that if the blacks mixed that with the flour they stole, mistaking the arsenic for baking powder, it must be very heavily poisoned. There are very large numbers of blacks in that locality and these blacks will give much trouble for years to come. (Sgd) Jas Lamond Inspector.

I buried what skulls and bones I found, but can find them again if required. J.L.<sup>653</sup>

### **Listowel Downs Murder.**

On 20 July 1900, C W Mitchell, manager of Listowel Downs via Blackall complained to the Blackall police that there were a number of blacks about Listowel with no visible means of support. They were hunted from Langlo a few months ago. They would not go unless he used force. Listowel should not be expected to keep such a number of blacks. A few would not be a tax. The overseer caught a black killing a sheep, so he shot the black's dogs and told him to clear off. The government should do something. The Blackall police advised the Inspector at Longreach that there were 25 blacks camped at Listowel, which was considered a permanent camp and requested instructions.<sup>654</sup>

At Listowel Downs on the night of Sunday, 26 August 1900, or early the next morning, three blacks, a gin named Jenny Williams and two blackfellows named Langlo Charlie and Mount Morris Charlie, respectively murdered another Aboriginal, named Peter. A report was sent to the Blackall police and two constables and a black tracker were sent to Listowel Downs. The blacks left the station, but were camped fifteen miles away making for Langlo Downs.<sup>655</sup>

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<sup>653</sup> QSA ITM665854 DR111100.

<sup>654</sup> QSA ITM17983 DR51889 pp 53-58.

<sup>655</sup> Morning Bulletin 8 September 1900 p 4.

The Listowel complaint and attached police reports were sent to A Meston, the Southern Protector for comment. Meston on 18 September 1900, recommended to the Home Secretary that the Western Blacks, as he called them should be relocated to the coast. Set out below is his report:

The prolonged drought has placed these Aboriginals in a very unfortunate position. It has stopped all work on the stations, killed off the stock, dried up the water holes, and starved the emus and the marsupials until they are hardly fit for food. Many stations are no longer in a position to feed a number of Aboriginals dependent on those employed, and not even to care for all or any of those who have worked for years on the runs. If these Aboriginals are to be saved from death by preventable diseases and starvation, they will require removal to the coast, as the cost of feeding them in their present localities would be excessive, and in no way satisfactory to anybody concerned.

If brought to the coast, they could be supplied with rations to take them to the nearest railway station, to which it will be necessary for them to walk, as coach fares at western prices are out of the question. All the western men on Durundur walked from Thargomindah to Cunnamulla and some had walked from 300 miles beyond Thargomindah. Many of the western blacks are living at present under very hard conditions; engaged in a desperate struggle to prevent starvation and some are perishing miserably with diseases and defective nutrition, the latter including the children of half-starved mothers. The unfortunate women, (whose) necessities in food and clothing also place them at the mercy of all classes of whites too often with the worst results. Their removal to the coast is the only solution to the problem worth discussing.

We shall probably have a letter from Langlo Downs making the same complaints as the manager of Listowel. The removal of the Aboriginals to the coast and the restriction of the women to the companionship of their own men will effectually put a stop to the breeding of half-castes, a very undesirable element in any white population. The absolute isolation of the aboriginal women from contact with whites is the only effective method of stopping all further supplies of half-castes and their attendant quadroon and octoroons among whom the law of atavism will assert itself in after years with unpleasant results among some of the descendants.<sup>656</sup>

The Home Secretary, Foxton wrote on Meston's letter as follows:

I prefer that temporary measures should for the present be taken to relieve the necessities of these people where they are, pending a final decision as to the general policy to be adopted in reference to the western blacks.<sup>657</sup>

The reader may care to have a leftwing view of the issues plaguing Listowel Downs per the *Worker* of 18 August 1900:

On Listowel Downs station a day or two back, the black boys engaged as stockmen on the station struck work for an increase in wages. They were in receipt of 10s. per week, but requested the current rate of wages, viz, £1 per week. This, the manager refused, asking them to go on at the old rate and he would allow them their clothes. The boys declined. Surely, if they were worth 10s. and their clothes, as promised by the manager, they were worth what they asked for. The boys stuck to their demands, and the manager ordered them off the station. On the same station during the scrub-cutting, a number of blacks were paid 10s. to 12s. less per week than the whites. At present blacks are employed repairing wire netting damaged by the late rains, not because they are capable fencers, but because they are most unreasonably cheap. This is everything in the eye of the Listowel management. Another matter that calls for attention (particularly the police) is the opium trade, the blacks being the principal buyers, and the Chinese gardener employed by the station, the seller. This nefarious trade is being carried on all hours of the day and night, and the station people must be cognisant of it. When a Chinaman is allowed (independent of the gardener) to camp five or six weeks, close to the station, busily employed making opium pipes and selling the drug to the blacks. The gross immorality practised by the blacks, in conjunction with the whites, is both scandalous and

<sup>656</sup> QSA ITM17983 DR51889 pp 53-58. Note: Meston was aware of the murder of Peter at Listowel Downs.

<sup>657</sup> Ibid.

disgusting, and the sooner the station authorities put their feet down on the whole business, the better.<sup>658</sup>

### **SUPPOSED SHOOTING OF ABORIGINALS — INVESTIGATIONS BY MR PARRY-OKEDEN.**

Thursday Island, September 29, 1902. Mr Parry-Okeden, Commissioner of Police, Inspector Marrett, and Dr Roth, Protector of Aboriginals, returned after an absence of fifteen days in Cape York Peninsula investigating the finding of certain human remains, said to be those of Aboriginals who were rumoured to have been shot. Mr Parry-Okeden's party left here in the *Vigilant* on the morning of 11 September and reached Mapoon at midnight the same day.

On 16 September, at the Moreton telegraph office, Mr Parry-Okeden, in his capacity as a justice of the peace, opened a magisterial inquiry. Dr Roth, Protector of Aboriginals, acting in unison with Inspector Marrett, conducted the inquiry. The Rev Mr Hey, though not participating in the proceedings, was present during the inquiry. Suspicion had pointed to Constable Hoole and the native police patrol. Dr Roth gave lengthy evidence of having had certain things shown him, and he produced certain exhibits.

The following witnesses were also examined: Mr Scott Lindeman, John Barker, and August Nicholson, of the Moreton telegraph staff; Mr Haskett and John Dunne, of the MacDonnell telegraph office; Inspector Marrett, Sergeant Whiteford, Constable Hoole, native police troopers Albert, Rob, and Jerry, and Aboriginals Cockroach Joe and Pumpin. On Sunday, 21 September, the party rode about fifty miles, going over the ground referred to in the evidence. The taking of evidence was resumed on Monday morning and completed Monday night, when the inquiry was adjourned sine die, there being certain Aboriginal witnesses whose attendance could not be secured. At the adjournment of the inquiry on Monday night, 22 September, Dr Roth, Aboriginal Protector, made a statement that he had accused Constable Hoole, who was in charge of the native police patrol which was at Moreton in April 1902, but after hearing the evidence, in his opinion, Constable Hoole was entirely innocent. It is understood that the Commissioner had not allowed Constable Hoole to be placed on active police service, and that he and the troopers who formed the patrol were sent south pending the outcome of the inquiry.<sup>659</sup>

### **ALLEGED DISPERSAL OF BLACKS. STRONG MINUTE BY THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL.**

The depositions taken at the Moreton telegraph office, Cape York Peninsula, by the Commissioner of Police (Mr W M Parry-Okeden) were submitted to the Attorney-General, who advised the Home Secretary as follows:

Department of Justice,  
Brisbane, 1 November 1902.

Memorandum for the Hon. the Home Secretary.

Inquiry re human remains found in Cape York Peninsula and supposed to be those of four Aboriginals.

I am satisfied, though the evidence is not sufficient to justify a conviction on a charge of murder or manslaughter, that the deaths of at least two (and probably four) Aboriginals whose remains were found, were caused by one or more of the native troopers who accompanied Constable Hoole on 8 April last. At the same time, I think Constable Hoole cannot be acquitted of grave culpability. He seems to have exercised no control over the troopers, who appear to have carried loaded rifles, and

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<sup>658</sup> Worker 18 August 1900 p 9.

<sup>659</sup> Brisbane Courier 30 September 1902 p 5. Brisbane Courier 29 October 1902 p 9. QSA ITM2736531 DR112315, file 02/330.

probably a reserve supply of ammunition. He gave them an order to "stop" escaping Aboriginals, allowing [sic] them to take the whole business of arrest into their own hands, apparently not reflecting that they might interpret the order "stop them" as authorising the use of firearms if they could not otherwise "stop them." He does not seem to have concerned himself so far as to investigate the facts with respect to the two shots which he heard, nor to have taken the trouble to ascertain whether the two "parcels" containing bodies, which he saw contained bodies of males or females, or of persons who had recently died or had been long dead, or whether there was anything to indicate that they had died from gunshot wounds or other forms of violence. The same easy-going, negligent method of procedure was exhibited in his permitting, without investigation, the Aboriginal Cockroach to take possession of a gin alleged to have been his at one time, and permitting the gin to be virtually compelled to travel with the party till she became "knocked up," and then leaving her to the tender mercies of Cockroach, and to solitude, five miles from her companions.

Taking it altogether, his action throughout seems to have been the reverse of creditable, while his absolute silence about seeing dead bodies suggests a great want of candour. I do not know who was responsible for the ammunition served out to the troopers before starting on patrol, or for an examination of their rifles and the amount of ammunition in their possession on their return. It does not appear that anyone is in a position to state how much they took away or how much they brought back. If anyone could furnish this information, it might go a long way towards testing the truth of the stories told by the troopers, particularly "Albert" and "Noble."

On this, the Home Secretary, to whom the papers were referred, wrote: Refer to Commissioner of Police. I fully concur in the view taken by the Attorney-General and commend the last paragraph relating to the troopers' ammunition to the Commissioner for consideration. I am of opinion that Constable Hoole should be discharged from the force. The Aboriginals implicated have, I understand, been brought South, and should not be allowed to return to the North. J F G F, 6 November.<sup>660</sup>

As a result of the recent inquiry by the Commissioner of Police and the Northern Protector of Aboriginals, concerning an alleged dispersal of blacks in Cape York Peninsula, Constable Hoole severed his connection with the Police Force, and the four native troopers were sent south to the Durundur Aboriginal station. Only three of the boys were implicated, and they will not be allowed to return to the north.<sup>661</sup>

### **Police Steam Launch — *Vigilant*.**

In October 1882, the Premier moved a sum of £475 for a police steam launch to patrol the coast north of Cardwell. Sub-Inspector Douglas to have charge of the boat, as he had seamen's qualifications. The headquarters of the craft would be at Cardwell.<sup>662</sup> The steam launch, *Vigilant*, was built by Mr James Hardman, of Balmain, Sydney, to the order of the Queensland government. The vessel was capable of steaming at a rate of twelve knots per hour in smooth water, and had proved a good sea boat, having behaved splendidly during the trip from Sydney. She was 60 feet long and 5½ feet deep, with a 12 feet beam; and fitted with all the necessary accommodation. The engines were of the compound condensing type supplied by Messrs Goodall and West of Johnson's Bay, Sydney.<sup>663</sup> £168 was voted for the salary of the engineer; but the officer in charge and the mate were paid as first-class sub-inspector at £250 and the sergeant at £144. Mr Douglas was especially qualified, having served in Her Majesty's Royal Navy.<sup>664</sup> The *Vigilant*, was useless for nearly two months, after which for a year she did good work visiting settlements along the coast, until the latter end of 1883 when Mr Douglas was ordered to bring the *Vigilant* to Brisbane.

<sup>660</sup> Brisbane Courier 7 November 1902 p 4.

<sup>661</sup> Brisbane Courier 20 November 1902 p 4. Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia 1788-1930, <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.13/1340762> (accessed 27/06/2024).

<sup>662</sup> Telegraph 18 October 1882 p 2. Queenslander 21 October 1882 p 534.

<sup>663</sup> Telegraph 16 October 1882 p 2.

<sup>664</sup> Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser 26 June 1882 p 2.

After a short spell in Brisbane, he was sent to the Townsville district in the place of Inspector Morisset, who was granted a year's leave.<sup>665</sup> The little steamer *Vigilant* was taken over by the Portmaster, and employed in the river and Bay, taking the place of the *Laura*, which was in the Bay relieving the pilot schooner. As soon as she ceased in this capacity, the *Vigilant* was sent up to Maryborough, to be employed in driving piles for the new beacons in Great Sandy Straits.<sup>666</sup>

### Police Steam Launch — *Sabina*.

The Commissioner of Police has received the following telegram from Cardwell:

The *Rebecca Jane*, loaded with cedar, from Port Douglas for Melbourne, has been wrecked on Bramble Reef. The captain and two men have arrived here and report leaving six men on board. There is a head wind, and the pilot cutter cannot go out. Sub-Inspector Johnston leaves in the *Sabina*, as it is a matter of life and death.

Sub-Inspector Johnstone went out in the police steam-launch, *Sabina* to rescue the remaining six but as there was a half a gale of wind blowing and heavy seas running, Johnstone was forced to return to Cardwell. The six crewmen ultimately made Cardwell in the brig's longboat.<sup>667</sup> The steam-launch *Sabina* arrived at Port Douglas on 5 August 1880 from Cardwell, with Inspector Johnston and his troopers, who were now patrolling the coast northward.<sup>668</sup> The police steam launch *Sabina* returned to Cooktown on 28 August dismasted. Sub-Inspector Johnstone reported the discovery of a large river nine miles north of Schnapper Island, with good, thick scrubby banks, containing plenty of cedar and a timber supposed to be ebony. He named the river the Ruby. Harbourmaster Fahey accompanied Sub-Inspector Johnstone to beat *Sabina* to Schnapper Island, as she was unable to steam against the strong south-easterly wind.<sup>669</sup> On 10 September, *Sabina* with Sub-Inspector Johnstone and his boys, returned to Port Douglas. They had a disastrous and dangerous trip. A more unfit, worn-out, and rotten vessel could not be found; her engines were not fit for use, her boilers were used up, and the hull was old, rotten, and leaky.<sup>670</sup>



Queensland Aboriginal group. Call Numbers PXA 773/Box 6 State Library of NSW.

<sup>665</sup> Brisbane Courier 3 July 1905 p 7.

<sup>666</sup> Queenslander 6 October 1883 p 562.

<sup>667</sup> Queenslander 26 July 1880 p 103 & 7 August 1880 p 167.

<sup>668</sup> Brisbane Courier 21 August 1880 p 6.

<sup>669</sup> Brisbane Courier 1 September 1880 p 3.

<sup>670</sup> Queenslander 25 September 1880 p 411.

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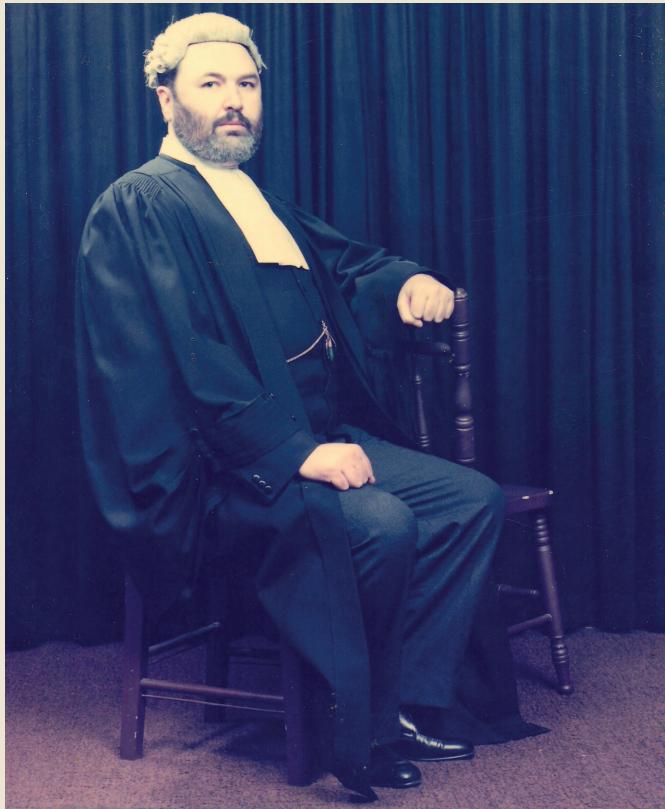
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## Abbreviations

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| GG  | Queensland Government Gazette   |
| LA  | Queensland Legislative Assembly |
| LC  | Queensland Legislative Council  |
| NLA | National Library of Australia   |
| NMP | Native Mounted Police           |
| NP  | Native Police                   |
| PM  | Police Magistrate               |
| QPG | Queensland Police Gazette       |
| QSA | Queensland State Archives       |
| RN  | Royal Navy                      |
| TI  | Torres Strait Islander          |



*Photo: Author*

The Queensland Native Police were renowned as keepers of the peace and good order on the Queensland colonial frontier. Trackers of the highest order graced the saddles of the Native Police. In the annals of Queensland policing, few units have displayed a devotion to duty and loyalty to the cause of justice to rival the Native Police.

The Australian Aboriginal lived in splendid isolation. On the entry of Australia into the world of commerce and trade, a great disparity arose between Aboriginals and settlers. Technology deprivation soon became apparent.

From a semi-arid, unforgiving country - always was, always will be - appeared an abundance of beef and flour, and gibbers harder than rock. Bush tucker and stone implements soon gave way to cultivated food and metals. It was there for the taking and they helped themselves handsomely from the settlers' flocks, gardens and huts.

*Down came the squatter a-riding his thoroughbred;  
Down came policemen — one, two, and three.  
“Whose is the jumbuck you’ve got in the tucker-bag?  
You’ll come a-waltzing Matilda with we.”*

Now Wokes would require dispersing rather than waltzing. Be that as it may, the world had long moved away from collectives to private ownership for profit. Taking instead of buying in the settler world meant only one thing: the troopers. The government employed Aboriginals to police Aboriginals. With the eventual recognition that the Aboriginals were seeking a better standard of living but lacking the skills to achieve those ends, the government of the day resorted to welfare economics and instituted a food dole for Aboriginals on the northern frontier. It then attempted social engineering by introducing *The Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act*.